Chrome Shelled Regios Volume10

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These are novel illustrations that were included in volume 10

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●あまぎしゅうすけ

第15回ファンタジア長編小説大賞佳作「マテリアルナイト　少女は巨人と踊る」でデビュー。広島県在住。今年から金魚を飼ってます。かわいい！かわいいが……苔、コケ、コケェエエエ！ちくしょう、睡蓮鉢の方はいいが、ガラス水槽の苔はキツイゼ。がんばれぼくらの生体兵器（石巻貝）!!

鋼殻のレギオスX

コンプレックス・デイズ

雨木シュウスケ

ファンタジア文庫

イラスト　深遊

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鋼殻のレギオスX
コンプレックス・デイズ
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ファンタジア文庫

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鋼殻のレギオスX
コンプレックス・デイズ

甘い香りとともに、今年もまたツェルニにその日がやってきた。
「ばかばかしい」。愛の告白の代わりにお菓子を贈るバンアレン・デイ。
その宣伝ポスターの前でフェリは呟き、無表情のままため息をつく。
どうせアレは、ツェルニ中に漂うこの甘ったるい空気に気付くこともなく、いつも通りの日をぽややんと過ごしているに違いないのだ。
「……ばかばかしい」。フェリはもう一度、呟いた。
同じ頃、ニーナはディックと名乗る、不思議な雰囲気を漂わせた青年と出会う。その出会いが、後にもたらす真の意味を知らぬままに――。
バンアレン・デイを巡る3つの物語のほか、自律型移動都市（レギオス）誕生の謎にまつわる因縁を描いた、中編書き下ろしを収録！

ファンタジア文庫

雨木シュウスケ作品集

マテリアルナイト　少女は巨人と踊る
マテリアルナイトII 少女は聖霊と歌う
マテリアルナイトIII 少女は蒼剣と語る
マテリアルナイトIV 少女は世界と歩む
マテリアルナイトV そして少女は慈しむ

鋼殻のレギオス
鋼殻のレギオスII サイレント・トーク
鋼殻のレギオスIII センチメンタル・ヴォイス
鋼殻のレギオスIV コンフィデンシャル・コール
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鋼殻のレギオスIX ブルー・マズルカ
鋼殻のレギオスX コンプレックス・デイズ

「己を信じるならば、迷いなくただ一歩を踏み、ただ一撃を加えるべし」
鋼殻のレギオス X
コンプレックス・デイズ

お菓子。
こんなものが作れなくても、
フェリには他にできることがある。

目を瞠る美貌が赤い髪を揺らして仰け反る。
顔を真っ赤にするには十分な破壊力に
レイフォンは視線をそらした。

Sweet Day - Sweet Morning

Pippiroppi pippiroppi pippiroppi~~♪

"Well well well, Selina's cooking class, is a-bout to be-gin"

Pippiroppi pipiporobbi~♪

".....What in the world is this?"

Morning. If one were to head down to the dining room, suddenly you would hear background music playing as well as seeing Selina, with a ladle, singing.

"Because it's finally Van Allen's Day, if we didn't do anything, it wouldn't be interesting, wouldn't it?"

Selina went out of her way to tease Nina, who was applying pressure to her temples.

"Nina, If you don't prepare sweets like Leu..."

"Bu-"

Already in the dining hall with an unconcerned expression on her face, Leu, having finished breakfast, blew on her tea.

"It's an obligation. Obligation!"

Turning from the shaken Leu to Selina, Nina tilted her head.

"If Leu is preparing it, isn't there no need for a class?"

"Really~~, were you listening? Nina-chan will make her own sweets."

"No thanks, it's not necessary."

"Nina-chan, you're too stoic~. If that's the case, you won't be popular with the opposite sex, you know."

Nina thought Selina was really interested. However, no matter how many people were swept up in Selina's pace, without fail, they were never enough.

Since the beginning of breakfast preparations, Nina just let Selina's talking fade away.

"There's that interesting new student, isn't there? That ace. Wouldn't he be happy if you gave him sweets?"

Layfon's image surfaced in Nina's mind.

"That guy, he said he doesn't like sweets. Besides, compared to me, his cooking is better."

"Sweets made by an unskilled senpai who tried her best! Fingers covered in cuts! With a little less of that usual cool feeling, confess! It's the best, isn't it--"

"The best is to know one's own weaknesses."

Truthfully, it wasn't possible to understand her. Nina followed Leu's lead and quickly finished breakfast, returning to her own room to prepare for class.

"Morning classes, if we're going to waste some time, let's meet at the gate."

"Not skipping."

A thoroughly serene reception. Having entered her room, Nina finished her preparations, grabbed her bag and headed for school. Selina wasn't leaving. It seemed she didn't have morning classes, judging by her intent to involve Nina with killing time.

Nina met up with Leu to ride the trolley. At first, there weren't many people due to the dorm being in such a remote area; after a short while however, it quickly became congested.

The sound of idle banter became clamorous, becoming so clustered in Nina's ears that she considered jumping off. These days, Van Allen's Day's name was well known, but today seemed to be quite the contrary. Rather, specifically today in order for it to make sense, the name became troublesome to bring up. Not just the girls, but also the guys seemed to suggest that today conversation was on hold.

"Hey, is it true no one is going to give any out?"

"Ah."

Leu confirmed it, Nina nodded in agreement.

(Good Grief, I don't understand)

Giving sweets, why did it become so important.

Leu somehow became restless, and next to her, Nina reconsidered jumping off the tram.

Sweet Day, Sweet Before I

Spontaneously escaping her lips, Meishen's humming went unnoticed. Mifi started singing when she did notice, after which Meishen turned to Mifi, who stopped singing. Also, Meishen stopped humming when she noticed Mifi.

"Wow, sweet! Nice atmosphere!"

Meishen turned towards that voice to find Mifi in the living room. She had already returned from her part-time job at the editorial department.

"Ah, welcome home."

"Mei-chi, you're making it again? Which means you still haven't decided on it?

"But....."

Mifi's shocked expression troubled Meishen.

Van Allen's Day was just around the corner.

The intention of that day was to give candy to others with goodwill, the intention that the day represented. Meishen learned of that custom, which had come from another city and established itself in Zuellni, from the coffee shop she worked at.

The Meishen who loved making sweets pursued the restaurant workers' ideas for the special Van Allen's Day menu.

Everyday following that, Meishen would, upon returning, try making them herself.

"Because, he finally invited me out."

The deliciousness of the food attracted her to look towards that place for employment.

That shop's chefs were required to have their own work critiqued until they could satisfy the critics.

With this, if the sweets Meishen made could be acknowledged, she could probably openly work in the kitchen.

"No, it's ok though."

Lined up on the table, after the trial products were picked up and tasted, Mifi had a difficult expression on her face.

"......What is it?"

"Well, well then.....Which one do you feel like giving to Lay-ton ?"

"......Eh?"

"......Did you forget?"

After making Meishen completely dumbfounded, Mifi had a shocked expression on her face.

"N, No. It's not like I forgot. But.....what should I do?"

"Well, I don't know. Mei-chi has such a magnificent chance to be able to declare it."

"Ah, um....."

That could possibly be true.

Starting that day, the number of the sweets Meishen made multiplied.

A Day For You 01

Whenever she came across those words, Felli would say, without any expression, "Stupid."

It was the day known as Van Allen's Day. A tradition from a foreign city, it should have no connection to Zuellni. Last year though, every confectionery that knew of Van Allen's Day had gone on a marketing campaign.

The result was what was happening now.

Numerous posters with "Van Allen's Day" written in big, bold letters were posted inside every building.

Beyond that, those poster's had

"To that person on your mind, send out those special feelings."

"This is the taste of my feelings."

"Spend some time together with a mature atmosphere about you."

written on them, and.....it wasn't only coffee shops and confectioneries; restaurants had also put out some of those posters and advertised ahead of time.

Van Allen's Day.....A special day where sweets are given to that special person of the opposite sex, and by those means, one's feelings are shared.

Of course, this custom came from conversations and gossip about another city.

Zuellni had no connection with it.

Though there was no connection, with an interest in love this season, the students had gathered information with the fervor expected of an academy city. It was a completely simple matter for such a craze to spread like wildfire.

"Stupid." Felli muttered again.

While taking her usual route home, she thought about dinner plans, and suddenly those posters were everywhere. She was fed up with it. In order to increase their revenue, the business department had come up with a list of marketing strategies and tried them out. The ones the majority of them did not like were generally dropped by the campaign committees. Coffee shops, restaurants, and most places with any relation to food and drink were generally advertised with a male audience in mind. Only confectioneries, bookstores, and grocery stores advertised with a female audience in mind.

Guys made Van Allen's Day reservations and asked girls out. On the other hand, girls were subjected to advertising for classes and things on how to make sweets.

Guys spend money while girls spend time, or so the saying goes .

'They're mocking me...'

Without any words, Felli immediately threw an angry glare at the nearest grocery store. If women could spend their time and suddenly make delicious treats, there wouldn't be any trouble. If men could spend money and still be at ease, there would also be no worries.

'Good grief.....'

The posters were visible all around the city, so one would have to be an idiot to forget about it. Felli discretely let out a sigh.

And.....

"Fuu, I bought a lot, didn't I~"

The nonchalant voice, along with its owner, emerged from the store.

The girl spoke happily and had a carefree expression on her face . Contrary to what she said, she was only using one arm to carry a small bag, but was apparently left with a satisfied expression on her face. But, Felli's eyes weaved their way to the rear of the group.

".....So, you don't think this amount of food is too much for the dorm, do you?" Seemingly unhappy, with a bag full of cheap lettuce in each hand. It was Nina.

"But you can finally go out and try lots of different foods. You wanted to make a lot of new things, didn't you?" The girl declared optimistically after turning her head. Nina frowned, feeling a headache forming.

".....Selina-san, isn't there some sort of misunderstanding?"

"No~t at all~"

To the person of the opposite sex you care about, a confession of love..... that intent of Van Allen's Day was disregarded, even to Felli.

"Whatever I've made before, you said you'd eat everything I placed before you, so I can make a lot of things, can't I~"

"Selina-san....."

It appears that she intends to experiment on cooking something. Her uniform was from the Alchemy Department, so there was no way she could be wrong.

"It's too bad the Heartseer fruit hasn't arrived, isn't it~? The shops had been commissioned to produce something or so I hear, so I thought the market would be caught up in that.....cultivation's also failed, I wonder?"

"That's kind of suspicious."

"It's nothing like that. We're talking about taste."

"It doesn't seem suspicious for even a minute?"

"However even if it's a small amount, when properly made, it has a positive result on proper nourishment, recovery from weariness and promotes an increase in appetite amongst other things."

"Which energy drink is that.....?"

"Well~, that is something we'll have another chance to try, won't we~? It'll be OK~. Since I'll properly think of something so that Nina can give a present."

"No, I wasn't planning on that kind of thing....."

"No~ way, it would be bad if you didn't give anything to the guy on your own platoon, wouldn't it?"

"No, that's because....."

From then on, whatever conversation unfolded, Felli, whose legs had stopped, became unable to hear them.

Felli stood still until she lost sight of Nina's dismayed figure weaving in and out of the crowd. Meanwhile, she also glared at the newly discovered rival before her.

He heard a clanking sound.

"Felli, what're you doing? This is....."

Having returned to the room just now, his nose assaulted by an offensive smell, Karian entered the kitchen after blocking his nose with a handkerchief.

His younger sister was standing in the kitchen. Just because of that, there was already trouble.

Going through the handkerchief, the irritating smell that had been entering his nose once again managed to enter.

The clanking noise that was heard was from the pot. Why was it coming from the pot? Together, they were siblings who couldn't cook. Thus as one would expect, he couldn't believe that the sound came from cooking.

"Felli.....?"

"Be quiet"

Gazing at the saucepan, Felli's eyes were tinged with an earnest light. Karian couldn't help but swallow his question as he held his breath.

"Just a little bit longer....."

With the clock grasped firmly in one hand, she alternated between checking it and the pot, as well as adding a few drops from a small bottle of liquid. The sound of the liquid vaporizing mingled with the other sounds, and the irritating smell had changed.

"It's ready....."

"W, what.....is?" A trace of ominous, black smoke rose from the saucepan. If the ventilation fan were not ventilating, the entire kitchen would be filled with a black haze. As Felli lifted the pot cautiously, it was obvious that something had been burnt black through over heating.

"Elder brother, please sample this."

What was placed onto a plate was then cut up with a kitchen knife, and after placing some on a smaller plate, it was presented in front of Karian's nose without hesitation.

"Unh....."

"Please sample this."

Repeatedly. He had the strength to not say any words of disinterest. Karian had, after taking several steps back, lost the ability to move his legs.

"Please wait a moment. That's it! I remembered. I have unfinished work in the student council room, something really urgent, that is....."

With his own words, he pushed himself back and could finally move his legs. In order to run from that strange black object releasing a strangely irritating odor, Karian quickly turned around from his right.

However, his legs had stopped once more. Before he knew it, Karian's surroundings filled with flakes.

"Sample this....."

Looking back, he could see Felli standing with her silver hair shining.

"If that talent were to fully manifest itself in another place, it would greatly please me, wouldn't it?"

"Sample this."

As though to completely turn a deaf ear to his words, everything on the small plate was being forced to him. From that smoke emitting, strange, dark matter, Karian averted his eyes.

Van Allen's Day.

Until recently, that name, which held no particular import, had in that mind, rose to its surface.

(F, For the love of.....)

Last year had Felli coldly disregarding the Business Department's campaigns, and yet this year doesn't seem to be the case. The younger sister who harbored no interest in others was currently interested in the opposite sex. It made him lonely, but happy at the same time. Now, if I were to eat this thing, I would draw closer to my cold demise.

(Remember this. Layfon-kun)

"Come now.....Sample this."

"Urgh, erm."

Felli stabbed a piece with the fork. Some charred portions had, under that pressure, broken off. She could possibly force it into his frantically shut lips.

No escape. The surroundings continued to fill with flakes, enveloping him to the point where not even an insect had room to squeeze through. Light was let loose like lightning. A flake mine? Felli could make explosions herself, and in addition, there was only a short distance between them. Just taking into account these factors, he couldn't come out of this unscathed. Karian's time to sample drew near.

(I've resigned myself to this, haven't I.....)

That's right. If this one bite was finished, it would be all over. The anxiety about the thought of those prepared ingredients entering a person's mouth wouldn't be felt much longer. In it existed the special qualifications necessary to label it as food, but to obtain those things today was impossible for his younger sister.

(How's the taste? It seems edible!)

Upon realizing, Karian opened his mouth.

On top of his tongue, that morsel flopped down and rolled.

"Fgah-, Guo-!"

He couldn't stop himself from letting out the words he spat out. An impact was delivered to the crown of his head. As he was losing consciousness, Karian braced his arm on the table. Still, something on the inside of his mouth continued to feel like it was splitting open. Each time he felt that small breaking feeling inside his mouth, his tongue became weak. No, wait. This.....This feeling, could it be the taste buds on his tongue making up the palate breaking down one by one!?

"Ha, Ha....."

It was said that the taste buds on the tongue numbered about ten thousand.....why in the world would you lose them to that extent.....? After thinking about it, his body trembled in terror.

".....It appears that it's failed, hasn't it?"

Felli's disinterested voice had turned toward Karian's skull.

"Well then, next sample this"

Felli said, while bringing out the next dish.

"What.....did you say?"

A cold sweat poured from his head and the small of his back.

Van Allen's Day.

A name that he didn't worry about had, this moment today, carved itself a memory of fear and became a cursed name.

Morning had come.

They had to call a cleaning service. The reason for this was that the kitchen had fallen into ruin. Leaving this battlefield, Felli took a shower and washed away her fatigue.

After sliding on the sleeves of her spare uniform, she undid the towel coiled around her head, used to dry her hair. It was an easy habit to get into, diligently brushing her hair to check her own appearance in a mirror.

No problem. She grabbed her bag and left the room.

On the living room table were the fruits from yesterday's battle. Resting on the palm of her hand, a small box sat neatly wrapped and tied with a ribbon. In order for it not to become too ruined, she placed it in her bag with great care and looked at her older brother's room.

"Well then, I'm off."

"......Try your best."

The moan-like reply came from the other side of the door. The voice sounded rough. Did he catch a cold from being up all night? Since his movements weren't sufficient compared to normal, his body had definitely weakened.

"Slovenly."

"......Sorry, but can you convey the message that I'm resting today?"

"I understand."

"I'm counting on you."

With that, nothing more could be heard from her older brother's room.

With nothing left to worry about, she left the mansion.

After being up all night till dawn, the sun's rays were intense. Felli narrowed her eyes and, until they became adjusted to the light, stood stock still.

(Now, the problem is.....)

While viewing the slowly dimming early morning scenery with narrow eyes, Felli began thinking.

The thing was completed. More time was spent than expected, but that was settled by reducing the duration of sleep.

How to hand it over?

That was the extent of the problem.

To begin with, Layfon's year was different. If the year is different, facilities would also be different, and the chances of meeting a student of a different year would be small.

At any rate, Zuellni was one of those places said to be a city only for students. The number of school buildings was nothing to be trifled with.

If there was any chance to reliably meet Layfon, it would be the platoon's training hours. If it were left until after school, it would come up at the military arts training facility.

(There is no other time to aim at but that one, is there?)

After finally being able to open her eyes, Felli set out.

However.....

How should she time the handing over?

That was the next problem.

After coming to the training facility.....it would probably be useless. Surely, Nina would be faster than Felli, without a doubt. Above all, Sharnid would be an eyesore. It was only a matter of time before she would be discovered, and if that were to happen she didn't know if she could say something.

(In that case, it would be better to be seen by someone unfamiliar than someone who was.)

In the event that someone were to see, it would be better if that stranger didn't know her name as well.

For that to happen, she would have to go to the first year facilities.

It would be good if she could go. Sometime during school, at lunch break would be when to go and hand it to him. There was no other time to spend like that.

(Fumu.....Let's go with tha.....)

No, wait.

All appearance of reasonable thought had suddenly halted. Her legs wouldn't stop. Calmly looking straight ahead while walking forward, her previously halted thoughts restarted.

Going to the first year facilities. That's fine. Layfon would be there. If she were to hand it over at the training facility, an acquaintance, particularly Sharnid, would see her. It would be better to avoid that.

In that case, the first year facilities. That was the conclusion she reached some time ago.

There she ran into an issue.

(Wait, Felli. You are forgetting something.)

Warning herself, why did she sense danger, she thought.

Who would be at the first year facilities? Layfon would be there. However, it wouldn't be just him.

That's right.....That girl was there.

(Meishen Trinden.....!)

After remembering that person, Felli looked up towards the sky .

With that cowering camouflage, that deceiver of men was there. That girl was there with formidable weapon-like cooking skills thoroughly emphasizing her familial appearance.

(How absurd.....)

In the classroom Layfon is in, that girl was there. Those two women who protect that girl are there. If she were to hand it over, there would be no doubt that she would be stopped by the gaze of those three. She couldn't think of Layfon flaunting the things he received from other people, but if he were to face the curiosity of those three, what would happen?

Layfon's weakness to pressure was first-class. They would be seen through without a doubt.

If that were the case, what would happen?

Meishen would see the sweets, or something like that. Gambling on cooking, far outstripping Felli, Meishen had.....

(Ku.....)

How ridiculous.

(Inside the school building, the gazes are too numerous.)

In this hopeless situations, Felli's mood turned somber.

As it was now, if a good idea didn't come to mind at this rate, she would struggle on to school.

The restless atmosphere that plagued the classroom everyday had cleared up. Though the boys would always chat loudly and idly, on the contrary they seemed to prefer sitting motionlessly

alone in their own seat today. Concealing their voices amongst themselves in a circle, the girls exchanged conversation and kept glancing at the boys, who asserted an unconcerned air.

Unprepared for the thick atmosphere that hung over the classroom, Felli secretly let out a sigh.

Even though up until last night Felli held something like scorn for that atmosphere, now she was joining in it. After feebly greeting her classmates while exhausted from betraying herself, Felli fell prostrated at her desk.

(However, coming this far, it would be irritating to withdraw.....)

How should she go about losing the public gaze while getting the chance to hand it to him? In her mind, this continued to torment Felli.

"Errr.....Loss-san"

With her name called, Felli came to her senses and she then lifted her head.

"Yes?"

An unfamiliar female student stood nearby. The uniform, like her brother's, was from the Law and Administration Department.

Meaning she wasn't a student from this class, but not only that, she was also an upperclassman.

"What is it?"

"Well, Karian-kun isn't here today and so I was wondering, what's going on? Everyday before class, he comes to the student council room, but it doesn't appear that he will even come to class.. ...."

"Ah, if it's about my brother....."

On that subject, Felli completely forgot about the message Karian had entrusted her with.

"His physical condition is poor, and so he said he's taking today off."

"Eh, is that so? You say he's taking the day off, is it that serious? "

The female student listened with an awfully flustered look on her face.

"Is he alright?"

She probably thought it was just a case of lack of sleep.

"Oh, well.....Karian-kun has a usual habit of pushing himself on the student council work and so fatigue probably caught up with him."

It was her own thought however, the female student in front of her had arbitrarily came to her own conclusion. Without the willpower to stop her, Felli left her to her own devices.

"Hey. You and Karian-kun live together, don't you? I want to go nurse him , would that be alright?"

Felli rolled her eyes at this girl's proposal.

"Ah, will that be too troublesome?"

It seems she had an unusual facial expression.

"Ah, no. I have no objections. Do you know the address?"

"Yeah. That's alright."

"Well then, do as you please."

"Thanks."

With something between smiling and laughing, the upperclassman, whose name she did not know, left the classroom.

"I see."

Watching her from behind, Felli had come to an understanding of her own.

In other words, if there wasn't a chance for them to be alone together, she would have to create a chance to be alone with him.

Afternoon recess. Felli turned up at the school building's rooftop. One could say the rooftop was usually left empty, and with benches left forgotten, this place wasn't very popular. Nearby

, there was a park with a better appearance. Unless a student took the time to prepare a meal beforehand, they wouldn't come to this place.

But, of course today would be different from normal.

Each and every spot on all of the benches were completely filled . Couples. Pairs happily chatting away while eating seemingly hand made lunches that would end with the giving of sweets.

"Kuu..."

In order to not be caught in these couples' field of vision, Felli concealed herself in the shadow of the entryway.

After restoring her Dite, she released her flakes.

The place targeted was the first year facilities.

And yet, Layfon's figure was not in the classroom.

"Good grief, what am I doing."

Irritated, Felli broadened the scope. Within a corner of the hectically processed maelstrom of information, an image of Layfon eating Meishen's handmade bento came to mind.

Before, there were times where she would disperse flakes as a diversion and gather those images. By no means has she thought today she would be searching for Meishen on her own prerogative.

She and those two noisy girls she called her childhood friends were having lunch alone.

Layfon wasn't there.

In that case where is he? The thought of Layfon's absence putting Felli at ease, she continued to broaden the scope.

(Good grief.....)

After meeting Layfon for the first time, this phrase which had become her favorite had once again come out, after which Felli thought.

(I am probably throwing myself at that hopeless boy.)

Even though she thought that, she couldn't stop her search. Felli sighed as she searched for Layfon's figure.

(There.)

Finally found him.

With a feeling of relief, she confirmed his surroundings.

Layfon was alone. However, a slightly tense atmosphere hung in the air, as a Psychokinesis other than Felli's was in the vicinity. The warehouse district. At this place which stored provisions and things produced in Zuellni, examining Layfon's side of the situation, he was concealing himself.

"Fon Fon?"

[Uwah! .....Felli?]

Silencing himself in panic and checking the situation, Layfon timidly responded to her.

"What are you doing?"

[This is for my part-time job with the City Police, however.....]

At the reply made with a concealed voice, for an instant Felli had furled her eyebrows, but immediately reconsidered this as a chance.

(If that's the case, it is possible to be alone together.)

Known as the warehouse district, the place did not have a good business condition. The problem was the existence of another Psychokinesist, but if Felli proposed to collaborate on this, the probability of her taking charge of Layfon was high.

"With the city police.....? What is it this time?"

[Well.....this is. This incident concerns the illegal importation of goods.]

"This again?"

[This time it is something different. It's seen as an ingredient in cooking. Being targeted, it's being used to lure out the culprit.....

In addition, there seems to be a somewhat strange group for support, or something.....]

And so, is he alone at that kind of place?

If that's the case, then proposing to collaborate would probably not be strange.

"I see, shall I lend you a helping hand?"

[Eh?]

".....What is it?"

Somehow Layfon's voice, rather than sounding surprised, sounded more like it was as though her presence was inopportune. Differing from her expectations, Felli felt offended and asked in response.

"Would my involvement be useless?"

[Th, That isn't what I meant exactly. Errr, what I was saying, this time there's something of a rather special circumstance, and so nothing would come out of this if I don't use my own discretion.....]

"Such a repetitive response.....what is that for? If we talked it over with that upperclassman, wouldn't it be fine?"

[That isn't quite the case.....]

"Well then, what would you call it?"

[Ah, please wait one moment.]

The other Psychokinesist addressed Layfon, Felli became sullen and kept silent.

[I'm sorry, eh? Agh, is that true!?]

Suddenly, Layfon shouted.

[Aah, no.....]

"What happened?"

[Sorry, I am in a bit of a hurry, so with this. .....Ah, it doesn't look like I will be able to go to today's training, so please convey the message for me!]

After saying that in a low voice, Layfon rushed from the area at high speed.

"Ah!"

Flakes had yet to be deployed in Layfon's area. It may have still been possible to pursue him, but in the blink of an eye, she lost sight of him.

"Really....."

Allowing Psychokinesis to flow smoothly at this range, even Felli would succumb to exhaustion.

"Even though people have their own problems....."

If she were persistent, she would make an error, but today that feeling wasn't there.

"Haa....."

Her body felt heavy even though the fatigue from the sleepless night seemed to just set in. Along with a breath, whatever was driving her till now slipped out.

When afternoon break met its end, Felli trudgingly returned to class. It seemed in the time Felli was away, several Van Allen's Day struggles had come to a close. Clearly, there was a divide between guys in good spirits and those who weren't. They were in luck as almost all of the gifts guys gave to the girls were high class reservations to shops. That approach directed the formation of a different atmosphere.

"Ur....."

From the seat positioned next to the door, a cheerfully speaking voice could be heard, at which point Felli froze in horror. Up until now, she could coldly brush it all away with the phrase, "Not

interested." On the contrary, feeling the self she brushed aside, she felt miserable.

"Urk....."

Staggering forward through the stifling atmosphere where it would be good if she could walk straight, she somehow managed to struggle to her own seat.

"Haa....."

Really now.....with that overlapping a sigh, Felli lifted her head. Come to think of it, this environment wasn't uncomfortable.

Upon lifting her head, she met the eyes of the female student sitting in the seat next to her.

"Ah, good after.....noon....." ` After finishing her greeting, that female student had once again started looking at the desk with vacant, drooping eyes.

Feeling an overwhelming sense of failure, Felli unintentionally overlooked the situation and inquired further.

"What is it?"

The girl's name was Eri. With beautiful, long black hair, she didn't think her image was bad, however usually she cut herself off from the rest of the class and stayed in darker corners of the room. In a similar situation, Felli, who didn't usually associate with other classmates, was treated as equally eccentric.

"Fu, fu, fufu....." While looking at the desk, Eri leaked a voice with laughter. "Sweets, huh? I lost them somewhere."

"Eh?"

"Fufufu.....So many times remaking them, and working late into the night, the sweets, huh? Fufu, fufufufufu....."

"That is, how should I make this clear....."

"Fufufu, that is alright. It was clumsy of me. Fufufu.....At least today that's what I thought."

At long last, that dry laugh subsided.

"Ah....."

"Fufufu.....Such a miserable conversation topic."

Eri also had someone she wanted to hand sweets to.

"Please don't be discouraged. Besides, if not today, there will be another chance."

"No." At Felli's consolation, Eri shook her head. "The times you see me summon up my courage, doesn't amount to just today."

"That is....."

"This personality of mine, I well understand that that gentlemen does not have a preference for it. I would also like to fix it, but by no means..... Nevertheless, I thought it would be today, but..... "

After sighing, Eri sank into silence.

After the upperclassman turned up, class began. Felli silenced herself to allow class to proceed normally. While doing as such, she observed Eri's situation. Seeing her letting out sighs and girls making hollow glances, Felli felt she would be infected by that feeling.

(At this rate, things will be bad.)

After blowing away the contagious feeling of losing, Felli said, " All right!" and nodded.

"Eri-san"

At the end of class, Felli hurriedly cleaned up and spoke out to her.

"......Yes?"

In a depressed state, Eri had a slow reaction.

"We're going."

Eri slowly tilted her head. Felli seized her hand, forcibly pulling her outside the classroom.

"Eh? Eh? Eh?"

Being a full head taller than Felli, Eri seemed to be stumbling as they departed from the school building.

"Say, what are.....?"

"We're going to go look for the thing you lost."

"Eh? But class has....."

"There is no meaning in a class you aren't listening to. Spacing out there is a pointless waste of time."

"But....."

".....Eri-san."

As the time till the start of the next class approached, there was no sign of life. When Felli stopped pulling on her, she turned to face Eri.

"I am reluctant."

"Eh?"

"I am reluctant to help. However after watching you, because I will stop giving up, you should not want to give up either."

".....I, am being unreasonable?"

"In any case, in that state, you were giving up. If that's the case, in order for me not to fail, cooperate with me. Come, for the time being, let's repeat today's actions from the beginning. Where is your room?"

"Fufu, as I thought I am being unreasonable."

With a dark smile, Eri followed after Felli.

Eri's place of living was an average one-room.

Even without saying it was average, practically before even walking in, she knew it was the case. Beyond the corridor, found soon after opening the door, there was a small kitchen and the interior contained the living quarters.

After looking around the room which was left with a seemingly dark impression, she turned to face Eri, having satisfied her curiosity.

".....Well then, let's try searching by reviewing today's actions."

"That would be good....., but I was thinking."

"What is it?"

"Felli-san is a Psychokinesist, so would it not be faster if I had you search for the sweets I dropped using Psychokinesis?"

"Talk of Psychokinesists searching for lost articles, have you ever heard of that?" Felli muttered while letting out a sigh.

"That talk of pride, could you leave it behind for now?"

"That was not what I was saying." To Eri who thought the problem was the pride of a military artist, she explained.

"Regarding Psychokinesis and the Psychokinesists that use it, there are the five senses, but on top of that, there is electromagnetic perception, infrared perception, provisions people do not have.

After checking those things, that diverse information can be gathered up."

"Y-Yeah." Whether or not she understood, with a puzzled look on her face, Eri nodded.

"Psychokinesists use flakes as an intermediary and extend Psychokinesis over a large range. Whatever information is there is perceived. However, that huge quantity is beyond the scope of normal human throughout. The braincells of a Psychokinesist are enhanced beyond a normal human. However as I was saying that large quantity of information, furthermore dealing with the whereabouts of an object created by people as a standard, it wouldn't be strange for people to say it's not possible. For this particular objective, electromagnetic waves and infra-red rays are completely useless and meet their limit for these reasons."

"We.....ll, in short?"

Of course, it appears she didn't understand.

"Therefore, if you have the exact material coating the sweets you prepared, moreover the raw materials encasing it could be useful, a sample of the exact wrapping paper you used, the arrangement, how you folded the paper, furthermore the ribbon you used, the things you used..... with that, by memorizing these things, searching to an extent should not be difficult..... Right?"

"Y, Yes....."

"If I had those things stored in my memory, this topic would be simple, but that isn't the case. .....Your explanation being easy to understand, if you made that the basis of your search, usually the probability you would find it wouldn't be zero."

"Wouldn't be?"

Eri's eyes filled with hopeful luminance. Felli shut her eyes in response.

"Today of all days has been a disaster, hasn't it? There are a lot of things out there like it."

"Ah....."

It seems Eri had also come to an understanding.

The boxes and wrapping sets from gift shops aimed at Van Allen's Day had large quantities as a selling point. Eri seemed like that type to buy things like that. Felli also did that so she understood well.

"Therefore, by whatever means necessary, you must search using your own power. Do you understand?"

"Fufufu.....It feels hopeless."

"Look at me! well then let us begin. First, when you woke up..... "

To Eri who burst out in hollow laughter, Felli began her inquiry in what seemed to be forceful interrogation.

The lost item disappeared between the time she left the room to when she entered the classroom.....That was certain.

The sweets stored in her bag couldn't have gone anywhere by themselves. Still, if Eri had simply taken care to not fall, it would still be in her bag, or so they say.

If so, didn't some sort of strange event happen to that bag?

"So, this is the place, isn't it?"

"Yes."

Eri nodded.

After the two had left the room, they headed in the direction of the nearest tram stop, their legs stopping only when they cleared the straight path through the forest of Yuusuiju [Spring-water tree] which was enveloped in a white haze.

This place was the only city water purification plant in the area. The sewage from the drainage system flowed into the underground reservoir beneath the forest, where suction from the roots hanging down from the Yuusuiju was applied. The roots of the Yuusuiju housed a filtration process, furthermore the

remaining waste in the roots would be broken down and converted into nutrients which periodically would be replaced with soil from the manufacturing district.

Yuusuiju had, like the name, a hole in the trunk from which excess water would flow out. That water would flow into irrigation canals above ground and collect, and from there go to the mechanical department for further filtration. The clean water would leave to become public water.

"This place, you parted with your bag here, did you not?"

"Yes, something completely took me by surprise and....."

According to Eri's information, early morning at this place, along with the sound of water, she heard the roar of of what sounded like a dangerous beast. At the violent sound of water, Eri was taken by surprise and ran until she reached the police station nearby.

At that time, at the sound of water, she was taken by surprise and dropped her bag, it seemed.

"Really, I had no idea what was happening, so I became scared and soon after left from here."

After returning with officers from the city police, they scattered throughout the interior. While searching for the bag, the source of the roar was nowhere to be found.

While listening to Eri's explanation, Felli surveyed the forest.

"......if you lost it at an irrigation canal, it would be over, wouldn't it?" While gazing intently at the Yuusuiju forest, Felli muttered.

"Please don't say such unpleasant things."

"For the time being, we will search for the bag in the vicinity of the location you dropped it."

Leaving the grimacing Eri, Felli entered the Yuusuiju forest.

"Felli-san?"

"If there is a way, we will know soon. The lost item has yet to be reported to the police station. After reporting, into the forest."

The Yuusuiju forest had high humidity, probably also from the decomposition functions of the bacteria, and the hot water gushing out from the holes. Consequently, at that place, a public bath house and a warm-water pool had been built. The white haze enveloping the Yuusuiju was from the resulting steam.

While steam rose from the irrigation canals, Felli's group continued to search once more.

"I can't endure this any longer."

Brushing aside the withered grass of the earth's surface and forcing her way through the weeds for a short while, Eri lifted her head and wiped away her sweat.

As a consequence of moving around in high humidity, her breathing grew harsh. Their long hair clung to their cheeks and necks with a sticky feeling.

"The condition of the clothes we're wearing makes it look like we just came out of a sauna."

Brushing away the hair sticking to her forehead, Felli was also breathing hard.

"Moreover, we've searched this much and still haven't....."

"The only thing we can do here is search."

She tried to encourage Eri who looked to be in a state of fatigue, but she quietly hung her head.

"Well..... once again, it truly looks like it won't work out."

"Eri-san....."

Eri showed the same dispirited smile, but that was probably her distinctive characteristic. The moisture on their faces somehow felt refreshing.

"For the one box of sweets I was going to give, the me that worked so hard to come this far, had made such an absurd memory."

That was something Felli too identified with.

Having just realized, Eri became flustered and shook her head for Felli whose expression became sullen.

"Ah, you're mistaken. That wasn't what I meant....."

It was at that time.

Zaa.....

"Eh?"

"Wha-"

Suddenly, water poured down on them from above. High above , the Yuusuiju leaves were covered in moisture to the point where they could barely stand the weight. Then like a chain reaction, it all came down at once.

That instance of a downpour had swallowed up their shrieks and abruptly ended.

The aftermath left the girls dripping wet.

"What in the.....":

Dripping wet, her condition hit her all at once.

"Ah, ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha!"

There, suddenly in a large voice, laughter had overcome her, to which Felli, who wore a startled expression, lifted her head.

"Really, we look like idiots. One box of sweets, in order to give it out, something like this, really....."

For sometime she stood there, dumbfounded, watching Eri doubled over laughing, but before long Eri was able to stand.

"Felli-san."

Silently being glared at, Eri stopped laughing.

"I became defiant."

"What do you mean?"

"Because I somehow became fixated on the hand made sweets, I couldn't move on. If I select good-looking sweets from a shop somewhere, it'll be fine. Better than searching desperately for a lost

box of sweets in this kind of place, by far it would comfort me more to show myself in front of that person and hand him a different box of sweets."

"Y, yes....."

"Felli-san, I've decided. I will confess to that person. Yes, I don't have time to waste for that kind of thing. If I want to meet him today, I must immediately buy another box of sweets. Felli-san, if you have someone you want to give something to, you don't have time to spare at a place like this, you know. If we don't take action, "

".....someone?"

Grabbing her hand, Eri, who had previously expressed a dispirited smile, changed. Had Eri's melancholy been thoroughly washed away by the water from the Yuusuiju? Nevertheless, with her sudden change, Felli couldn't follow her.

"Come, let's hurry. For now, let's do something about these soaking wet clothes."

That is to say, this time Eri grabbed Felli's hand and dragged her in the direction of the forest's edge.

"Eh? Say....."

"Come, let's hurry. There's not much time left, you know."

At the sudden reversal of position, for meddling, Felli was at her mercy.

They returned to Eri's room and showered. For the time being Felli changed, afterward they left as if being driven out of the room and arrived at the mansion.

After entering her room, Felli once again put on her uniform. Given that the one she was wearing today was a spare, she had to overlook the shoulder of her usual uniform. It wasn't that the uniform was conspicuously soiled anywhere, but this morning, the enthusiasm she had during the time she was wearing it gave it the feeling that it had been magnificently trampled.

The wet, crumpled uniform was currently in a paper bag. The clothes she borrowed were placed together with her uniform to be taken for cleaning.

(Eri-san, will everything turn out well for her?)

She had no idea who the other person would be, but with the vigor Eri displayed previously, she felt Eri would successfully give it to him.

(I will.....)

Upon thinking of it, she began making preparations. Changed into her uniform, Felli brushed her hair once more, prepared another paper bag, and put the clothes she borrowed inside.

(At any rate, I have no choice but to search for Fon Fon.)

Before that, she would need to return to school. Felli's bag was left at school, and inside were the sweets.

(First of all, I must return to the classroom.)

After leaving the classroom, she dropped the clothes at a nearby dry cleaners and headed for the school building. Eri said she had run out of time so she returned to school with a tremendous amount of vigor, but Felli felt no such pressure.

She walked, tottering.

She always walked at her own pace, but today she walked with the timing she had become accustomed to.

She finally arrived at the school building. With class having long since ended, the classroom was bathed in crimson light.

"I have to search for him now, don't I?"

Her mood was not lifting, so the increasing futility of the sweets was mortifying. Felli pulled out her Dite.

First, she needed to find him. Alone in the classroom, Felli released her flakes.

"Senpai.....Felli?"

After opening the window to allow her flakes to escape, a voice came from behind.

"Fon Fon? Do you need something?"

Pinning down the impulse to turn her head, she turned to face him and inquired. The flakes circled behind her. Somehow, she felt exhausted.

"Err.....Well, I have a request."

With just that, she understood what Layfon wanted to say. Of course, Layfon looked troubled.

"Why does it seem like..... you always rely on people?"

"You understand?"

Still troubled, Layfon smiled. She was probably already aware of this.

It probably had to do with his part-time work with the city police. Just looking at Layfon's appearance, it was probably over.

The request he was talking about probably had something to do with Felli's Psychokinesis.

"Rather than relying on people, it's wrong to use them, however , either way taking advantage of that amiable quality is the real problem, don't you think?"

"That is possibly true, however....."

Gazing at Layfon overwhelmed by the criticism, Felli dispelled all of the resentment that had built up over the day.

"Well then, what do you need me to do?"

With a relieved expression, Layfon briefed her on the situation.

"......Okay, no problem."

The target of the request was to find Gorneo who was captured somewhere. After raising an eyebrow at that detail, Felli nodded.

"That's good."

"However....."

"Eh?"

"Th-....."

With her head turned, Felli reached into her bag with her hand, and stopped.

"Th- ?"

Puzzled, Layfon tilted his head.

(Realize it you idiot!)

Holding her outbursts inside, Felli took a deep breath. In that instant, she put a bewildering thought to work.

"This is....."

Layfon's eyes widened at the thing she took out of the bag.

"Something I made, and so sample this please."

"Ah, sweets.....? .....Felli did?"

"What is that response?"

"Ah, no no no, it's nothing. Yes"

"Uu.....yes."

Opening the sweets handed to him with caution, Layfon's face became stiff.

"Ah, the appearance, it looks splendid."

"Is that so?"

"It would be rude, so I thought it would be better to eat this as soon as I get home....."

"That is not good. Please eat it now."

"Uu....."

Having lost to Felli's glare, Layfon put one of the sweets into his mouth.

It made the sound of a crunch, to put it simply.

"Ah, delicious.....isn't it?"

Somehow feeling relieved, that expression didn't last long.

He suddenly started convulsing.

"Guu....."

"What's....."

As she said that, before her eyes, Layfon's face looked as though it was dyed violet, and he began heaving.

"Guu.....ge, *cough*, gufu.....n, ngh..... gokun"

After doubling over and making a large gulping sound, Layfon took a deep breath and lifted his head.

"Th, that was delicious."

"Please don't tell lies."

With a bad complexion and his face trembling bit by bit, his smile told her everything.

".....Being unskilled, I know that at least."

"Uu....."

"I brought you trouble, haven't I? Well then, shall we begin searching?"

Upon turning her back to Layfon, Felli sent off the flakes she had released flying in every direction.

(Well, this was probably decided from the outset.)

A lonely feeling passed by her chest.

She soon found the target. Somehow, she felt she didn't fully understand the situation, but with her feelings in front of her, it didn't really matter.

"I will lead the way. Please follow me."

"Okay, thanks."

Layfon lifted his head, and soon took to the air, leaving the classroom behind.

Felli sighed.

"......Ah, that's right."

Though she thought that he had left, Layfon had stopped.

"If it's something simple, I can make it so next time we should make the sweets together."

"......You don't have to do anything unnecessary, so hurry up and go."

"Yes."

This time for sure, Layfon had dashed off.

"......Good grief."

To learn how to make sweets from the person she wanted to give them to.....

Appearing both pleased and mortified..... With a complicated disposition, Felli muttered.

By the time Layfon arrived, Shante's group still continued observing, however by no means did they expect to see Eri's conclusion.

"What is she, that woman..... Mukiiiii!"

"Wh, what are you....."

The one confused was Gorneo. The person on Eri's mind was him..... that sort of surprise lasted long.

Above all else, that situation was brought on by Felli alone. With the exception of that surprise, it was nothing.

Gorneo was half naked. His set of clothes weren't incomplete, but he was half naked. The Military Arts uniform he was wearing had been shredded nearby, and had gotten scattered. His belt had also been shredded down the middle so his pants were on the

verge of slipping and falling off. One shoe had fallen of somewhere. Approximately half of his fastener had fallen off, so part of his underwear they didn't want to see showed through.

If you think about the fact that this was the 5th platoon's captain , it would be pitiable.

That Gorneo was down below. Although on that thick, tightened chest, were red scratches finely cut into him. The girl who instigated this was standing right there.

In that setting, Eri was present. By what kind of chance did she manage to arrive at this place, they didn't understand, but she was here.

Really, what in the world just.....?

Just a short while ago, Felli's group was just at that place, the Yuusuiju forest. Before, they didn't go very deep, however near the heart of the forest was an open field. If someone thought about the benefits of the warm earth, this would be great for one's health to have an afternoon nap here. .....If it weren't for the zone of high humidity in the surrounding area.

However, an area where people normally keep away from would probably be most suitable.

"Shaaaa!"

"Kiiiiiii!"

What kind of fight.....

Eri could be called nothing but a normal person. Clad from her head to her torso in Karen Kei, the stark naked body of the beautiful woman flickering like fire, she and Eri began a shouting contest in strange voices. Meanwhile, they continued to glare at each other.

With the strained atmosphere amongst other things, even though that unknown naked beauty would crush her if she were able to move for even an instant, that thought didn't seem to exist even in a corner of Eri's mind.

"Shaa! Shaa Aaaaaah!"

If she had a mane, it would probably be standing on end. For this reason, this beauty looked like a beast. Perhaps, Eri had heard this so called beast's voice that morning and thought it was probably part of her personality.

However, then, who is this?

"I can't excuse this!!"

Eri was attacked by the beauty standing before her.

What level of courage.

What level of recklessness.

Even though the origin may have been jealousy, for an ordinary person to stand and face a military artist.....

Felli was secretly, deeply moved.

She came to the conclusion that she probably had to be this reckless. If that wasn't the case, she probably wouldn't have run to that helpless, stolid, insensitive, thickheaded man.

Even if it was a craze, it was no good.

Even if it was misrepresented in a different form, it was no good .

Breaking through the wall consisting of that man's unmistakable thickheadedness would be like fighting filth monsters barehanded. Wouldn't that recklessness and for sure that foolhardiness be necessary?

Slap.

"Hafun."

After receiving the strange beauty's strike, Eri fell to the ground.

"......Well, that's why, didn't I say a miracle might not happen?"

That was, however, in a corner of that man's heart, a fragment of the feelings Felli wished for which probably wouldn't have appeared if she didn't say anything.

Flushing it out was the biggest problem. Still, after figuring that out, all that was left was probably to have courage, while not being reckless or foolhardy.

What kind of inconsistency was that?

Layfon appeared in that place, capturing the strange beauty with a net, and soon after rescued Gorneo.

After mentioning it, Felli had grasped an important lesson,

"Really, I will not try a second time."

It was that kind of place, wouldn't you agree?

Sweet Day, Sweet Before 02

There was a package in front of Naruki. Next to it, Meishen had an even more splendid package in her hands.

Sandwiches. The popularity of this food probably made it the optimal choice in this state of affairs.

First and foremost, it was simple. Even if that were true, there was still a clear difference between that of a novice and an expert. Rather, there was probably a clear reason for this simple thing.

"Mu mu mu....." After tasting the difference in quality, Naruki groaned.

"I think you did just fine." Meishen's follow up had a feeling of futility.

Honestly, she wanted to try again. It was careless. After realizing that, she reasoned that she had to abandon practicing in the face of her daily studies and part-time work. That negligence drove that self of hers into a corner.

Tomorrow was drawing near.

"Wh, what should.....No, there's intensive training. There's only intensive training."

"But tomorrow, Nakki, in the morning....."

"Ugh, that's right. No, If I pull an all-nighter....."

"That's bad for your body."

She understood Meishen's point. Because she was a military artist, if she used internal Kei, she could pull off one or two nights. However, that would cause a decline in her concentration and after thinking about how it would interfere with her job with the city police, as she thought she couldn't pull it off.

"Uu, but....."

"You can't fail in your search, can you?

"That's true."

"If you worked really hard to make it, they'd notice you."

"Nevertheless, there's a limit. Ah, I don't want to say this, but I'd be compared to you, Mei." After saying that, of course she would be disgusted with herself. "Let's start over. Whichever I choose, at this rate, it doesn't look like I'll fall asleep."

".....I'll give you a hand."

After she heard that, Naruki responded to her close friend with thanks.

A Day For You 02

Against the surface of the air filter, the sandstorm continued to swirl.

On the opposite end of the sand and grit, the moon with its round and solemn countenance was suspended high in the sky.

With almost all of the shops' posters taken down and the ground sparsely lit only by decorative lights, the area seemed to sink into darkness.

Within that, bathed in the moonlight, a voice appeared to resonate from the sky. Starting strong, but gradually weakening. With the ebbing of the howling, the sky over Zuellni stopped. There was nothing that could answer. In that place where shadows stood motionless, the natural echoing of a sound could be heard.

Only buildings whose rooftops were cast in the shadow of the Department of the Outer Edge were nearby. In the vicinity, there were no housing facilities. What was there was the manufacturing district, in which warehouses stored produce. Crops which received a surface security check here would then at some point be passed to the market above.

The remnants of the natural howling that could be heard suddenly began to move.

From somewhere that looked to be underneath, in the next moment the shadow disappeared from that spot.

"A thief in the produce warehouse?"

After being called first thing in the morning, at those words Layfon tilted his head. Though of course, he knew what a thief was .

"More importantly, a burglary attempt.....?"

In response, Formed had a troubled smile on his face. The place was Zuellni's only established City Police Station. While sipping tea served in the break-room of the building, Layfon looked at Naruki who stood next to Formed.

"It isn't as if there wasn't a thief, but....."

With something along the lines of hesitation in his words, Formed's speech wasn't clear. That face had the fatigue of a sleepless night.

Zuellni was an academy city. Almost all of the people residing there were students. It wasn't as if there were any adults there, but they did not have much of an effect on the city's livelihood. While

furthering their studies, upperclassmen also taught the underclassmen. Seniors conducted training and research. That was Zuellni's way.

Concurrently, there were also other cities. Foregoing changes in economics, a disparity of wealth would occur. There were also those who failed in business. Though they were not officially recognized, gambling houses also existed. If they were cheated, there would be those who would rush to the City Police.

Though only temporary, in the confusion caused by a robbery, it wasn't as if there was no one chasing after the thief.

But of course, as Zuellni was an academy city, the city's reason for existence was for the students. The city's economy was ultimately designed around the period after graduation. So that students didn't lose their senses for living in another city, simulations of their futures were established as a major premise.

Therefore, relief measures were enacted.

The loss of assets, those who declared bankruptcy received financial support from the student council.

Of course this aid had to be repaid, and if they weren't, graduation certifications would not be granted. While there were those who were held back due to not paying, they were few.

At any rate, those enrolled in Zuellni never faced starvation due to financial problems.

Hence.....for the time being, it was reasonable that cases of theft with student culprits were rare.

Particularly, theft of comestibles was seldom heard of.

"Why break into the produce warehouse....."

Layfon went right to the problem.

Though Layfon hadn't even been at Zuellni for a year, he still had a sufficient understanding of it. Before enrolling, he investigated the scholarship system and came to understand them both.

"If it's about the robbery details, they're easy to understand."

While Formed muttered that piece of information, he drank from his own tea.

Up until now, Layfon's classmate, Naruki, continued to stand motionlessly nearby.

"So, what was stolen?"

".....Nothing was stolen in this case. To be more accurate, it was an attempt."

"Huh?"

As a military artist, it was as if Layfon became a necessary companion, and that was probably why he was called. There were military artists in the city police. Maybe it was due to Zuellni's

academic traditions, but in the Military Arts Department, those who were known as elites were also platoon members. Normally these individuals did not show interest in the typical activities of the city police.

However, there were times in Zuellni where research data would be targeted by people from other cities, and within those groups skilled military artists would be present. For those instances, there were platoons members who would temporarily assist the city police.

Be that as it may, it was a short-term job unique to the Military Arts department.

Layfon, at his classmate Naruki's behest, found himself in that situation.

"What is it?"

For that reason he was called; however, it was just a burglary attempt.

Furthermore, for produce. Even if something was stolen, it wasn't as if they could make off with it on a roaming bus.

"Well, hold on."

Formed stopped the bewildered Layfon.

"The problem lies with the contents of the assailed warehouse."

"Contents?"

"You know, don't you? Tomorrow is Van Allen's Day."

"No, you might say that I do know, however....."

It was apparently a day where one receives sweets from those of the opposite sex whom are reciprocating goodwill. Though it was originally the custom of another city, companies in the Business Department involved in confectioneries had learned of it and had campaigned since last year.

With just a gathering of those at an age most interested in love, Zuellni's students received Van Allen's Day with fervor and an advertising struggle had grown considerably since last year.

"So, what about it?"

"With the Business Departments' influence, the Manufacturing District had obtained several new species of produce and grew them for this day. The warehouse that was broken into contained one of those."

"Well....."

Even in saying that the ingredients for making sweets were targeted, the exact point was still unclear.

"Every raw ingredient contained in the warehouse was examined beforehand. Due to the wide variety, it took quite a while, but thankfully a knowledgeable person was there. The target was probably the Heartseer Fruit."

"Heartseer Fruit?"

Formed nodded in response.

"A confectionery known as Rinka placed the production order, and so the arrangement was for the fruit to be delivered this morning. Rinka wanted to use it as their featured product."

"So then why?"

"Originally, Van Allen's Day's roots came from Forest City Erupa's customs. Eating food prepared from the Heartseer fruit was only permitted for married couples and engaged couples. In short, presenting food made from the Heartseer Fruit in regards to the opposite sex has the same meaning as proposing. It seems that the Heartseer Fruit had died out in that city, and so when a person wanted to make something for that special someone, they defaulted to sweets.....or so I've heard."

"Well....."

"That.....is it. Why would it be that in Erupa, they would only allow married couples and those soon to be married to eat food prepared from the Heartseer Fruit, do you get it?"

"No, hearing that all of a sudden....."

"There appears to be a stimulant in the fruit. It's usage depends on the circumstances, but for that sort of thing, it's said to be really convenient."

He tried to conceal it in his voice, but he was grinning broadly. Next to him, Naruki's face had turned red.

While not quite getting what Formed had said, Layfon was also not crude. He let out a troubled sort of laughter.

"Of course, it needs to be prepared a certain way. It seems only alcohol and steeped honey are needed to remove the astringency out of the sweet fruit."

After Layfon became troubled at his reply, Formed returned to his former self.

"However, that's the effect it has on a normal person. On a Military Artist, it has a different use."

Formed grew tense.

"Arousing the fighting spirit, it causes an abnormal acceleration of Kei flow. Other than that, it induces oversensitivity of the nerves , sharpens the senses, etc..... Compared to that time with DG, it's by far a much more monstrous Kei accelerating drug."

"It can't be....."

Just recently, they were completely caught up in the case involving the illegal Kei accelerating drug DG. These kinds of things, one after another.....Layfon looked at Formed with astonishment.

"Rinka's background up until now wasn't at all suspicious. Besides, it appears that to an extent that effect of the Heartseer Fruit was unknown. I don't know what the people interested in this product are thinking, but we can't leave such a dangerous item be. We prohibited its shipment, but the problem will soon be over its disposal. Layfon, until then, guard it."

So it seemed.

"So, I won't be here tomorrow."

After Formed's briefing ended, Layfon and Naruki rushed back to the first year building. Somehow, they managed to make it to the first class of the day, and now it was noon. While eating Meishen's hand-made lunch, Mifi had stopped listening. She spoke while Mifi had the straw for her milk still in her mouth.

"There are plans to transport something from the warehouse to the disposal facility tomorrow afternoon. The plan is starting tonight, and I will be stationed in the vicinity as a guard, so tomorrow I won't be able to come to school."

Naruki had replied.

"It's the long awaited Van Allen's Day too. Such a waste."

Mifi removed the straw from the empty milk carton and inserted it into a new one.

"You say it's a waste..... but I don't have anything so it has nothing to do with me."

After Layfon had said that, Mifi and Naruki simultaneously let out a sigh.

"......? What?"

"No. Ah, is that so?"

Looking as though something came to mind, Mifi started laughing with a "Nyahaha" and looked at Naruki.

"It's not that way for you, Nakki? A chance to be alone together with the section chief? Perhaps?"

"I won't be doing anything of the sort."

Exhaling, Naruki averted her gaze.

"Is that so?"

Hearing this for the first time, Layfon looked to Meishen. With the impression of "What do you think?" she tilted her head.

"Nakki likes men who are devoted to work, you know. Someone like the chief who goes back and forth between the research lab of the Cultivation Department and the City Police is just to her likings. Furthermore, capability is also important."

"As I was saying, you're wrong."

Though Naruki could be called obstinate, that face became faintly red. Layfon imagined them standing side by side: the short, but stout figure of Formed with the tall and slender physique of Naruki. They were polar opposites, or so he thought.

"The chief is just my esteemed superior. There's nothing more than that."

Glaring at Naruki, Mifi stuck her tongue out at her.

"Well, I must admit, all of this talk of Van Allen's Day's custom of gifting sweets originally has nothing to do with us, right? If not

sweets, there's also the route of making someone else lunch, you know~?"

"Th, that's true!" Meishen said suddenly in a bright voice, nodding in assent, to which Layfon was astonished.

"I, I'm sorry....."

Turning towards an already shrinking Meishen, Naruki and Mifi both sighed.

At the end of training at the Military Training Facility, Layfon went to explain the circumstances to Nina. Concerning his job with the City Police, and considering with that personality, he wasn't sure if anything was going to happen.

"I see....."

It was their after private training session. Nina nodded, wiping away her sweat with a towel with the straw of her sports drink still in her mouth.

"If it's like that, that means you won't be coming to clean the mechanisms tonight?"

Her lips parting from the straw, those words drawn from a harsh breath made Layfon realize what he had forgotten.

"That's right....."

"I will convey the message. Don't worry."

"Sorry."

"Think nothing of it, protecting the cities order is also the responsibility of a military artist."

In the Military Arts Department, while the crippled Zuellni had academic traditions, Nina was not awarded many benefits. Regardless of which city, Military Artists received favorable treatment, hence many were rich. Nina's home city was among those, but she faced down opposition from her parents and came to Zuellni. Without the assistance of her parents, she made a living at her part time job cleaning the mechanisms to pay for her tuition and expenses, and that lifestyle did not implant any pride into her.

"Even so, breaking into the produce warehouse makes them a strange bunch, huh?"

Nina appears to have become interested in the subject.

"Although the most useful thing seems to be a hazardous fruit."

That something in the produce warehouse was targeted, Formed had said not to disclose anything.

Moreover, Nina had been dragged into the incident with the illegal wine the other day.

That's why Layfon was keeping silent concerning the impending danger of the Kei accelerating drug.

"Hmm.....That thing seems to have slipped through manufacturing approval."

Uttering that, Nina simultaneously ended the conversation and training as well.

Upon washing away his sweat in the shower room of the Military Training Facility, Layfon headed towards the warehouse district that the produce warehouse was found in. The person who structured these insipid, rectangular warehouse left them with a cold atmosphere. Within the confines of the warehouse district, there were vehicles for personal use, which would then be used to transport cargo to the nearby trolley. Furthermore, there was also a freight service to transport packages to various places. Those personal-use vehicles were rarely left behind in their designated parking lot, meaning there was no one in sight. The warehouse district is said to be crowded with people in the early morning. At those times, the trams are running, transporting cargo. Standing next to a gate, Naruki held onto the number of the warehouse Formed had designated before hand.

"Anything?"

Upon inquiring, Naruki shook her head.

"No sign of movement."

Upon saying that, the shutters making up the front door of the warehouse opened, revealing a lit area. From there, Naruki led the

way up a small staircase from the front entrance to what seemed to be an area designated as a guard's rest area. Formed and a group of others were already there.

"I'm glad you're here."

Looking overwhelmed by a lack of time, Formed started and motioned for Layfon to approach the window.

"That is the aforementioned warehouse."

Upon looking at the place she was pointing at, not unlike the other warehouses, they were lined up. The tag "D17" was painted on the roof of the warehouse. The distinct difference was that the shutters in front were crushed flat.

"Provisions are the cities lifeline, and as such, that warehouse was built to be sturdy. That also includes the shutters. If an explosion occurred, it would still be in fine condition."

Whilst listening to Formed's explanation, Layfon surveyed the shutters. It seemed as though there was a deep, yet tiny depression in the shutters as though it were struck by a fist, and from there concentric circles radiated outward. No matter what way it was looked at, it looked to have been broken through blunt impact.

"It was a military artist, wasn't it, the one who did this?"

"Couldn't be anything else."

Formed nodded in assent.

Next to Formed who had a facial expression as if he had just acquired his resolve, Layfon continued to blankly observe. Strengthening his eyesight with Kei, Layfon could see the aftermath of the damage from his location in detail. He could clearly tell the damage was made from a blow with a fist.

(It's so small.)

The size of that hand bothered Layfon. Whether for an adult or a student, the hand was still on the small side. There was still the possibility that it was a male with a small build, but what clearly came to mind was the figure of a woman. Layfon shifted his focus to the ground in front of the shutters. If it were that blow, it wouldn't have been strange to leave a footprint behind. However, it seemed as though that wasn't the case. If that is the case, the strike was made by jumping from a distance.

(An agile blow from a short female Military Artist)

Upon arriving at that conclusion, Layfon looked elsewhere.

"However....." Formed let the problem slip. "It seems the culprit failed to break through the shutters. After that, the security alarm sounded causing the suspect to flee, but doesn't that seem quite foolish?"

Layfon also thought something along those lines.

"It feels like something came charging in at full speed, doesn't it ?"

Naruki nodded in assent.

"It seems there wasn't anything remotely resembling a plan. To get impatient to that extent..... Something or the other feels strange ."

Taking a sidelong glance at the quarreling pair as he leaned against the sofa, and closing his eyes so he wouldn't notice them. The night is long. He could take a short rest, or so he thought.

The change occured later that night. At that time, Layfon was on top of the warehouse's roof. He sat on the roof with his legs stretched out and his eyes shut. While using Sakkei to hide his presence, Layfon extended the sensation in his hands in all directions, reading disturbances in the atmosphere. In the sky, the newly waxing crescent of the moon seemed to be drawn, shining, on the thick clouds before it.

Upon sensing a disturbance, Layfon opened his eyes. Even now, Layfon maintained Sakkei. Meanwhile, his Dite remained in its weapon harness. If he were to restore it, the Kei would undo his Sakkei. In order to not come out of this empty-handed, he knew it would have to come to him. A presence..... From where he stood, Layfon looked in its direction. It came from the front of the warehouse.

Layfon stood, waiting to give the signal. Here and there, guards stood, hiding in wait with all equipment ready. While the night drew long, Layfon suppressed his presence and approached, jumping to the top of the nearest warehouse. For the time being, he

suppressed his presence to the point where he couldn't even think of getting caught.

(If it's from here, then...)

Even if the opponent were to flee, he would pursue. Without any feeling of haste, Layfon drew his Dite from its holster. The City Police had yet to complete their preparations, after all. Until one reached the vicinity of the warehouse building, the ground sloped downward. From there, it was a straight path to the warehouse. There was no getting lost on the way to the warehouse .

At that time, if all of the hidden police officers in front of warehouse D17 in which Layfon was located were to stand up, there wouldn't be a single stretch of ground left uncovered. If the owner of the presence were to run through, they would spread out and cast it over the subject.

A net. It wasn't just an ordinary net. The weights at the end of the nets contained batteries that, once activated, would release an electrical current for ten minutes through the net that would render a body immobile for its duration. The ten-minute net spanned the entire roadway, and if even a hint of an intruder would show itself, they would have him covered immediately. Meanwhile,

"What the!?"

In response to a piercing shriek coming from the police hidden on the roof, Layfon rescinded his Sakkei and restored his Dite. A

sudden cross wind had caused the net to fall and delayed preparations by an hour. That incident gave the short individual the opportunity to escape. Layfon allowed his Kei to rise throughout his body in order to intimidate the approaching presence. In that instance, that small body stopped moving straight forward and fled perpendicular to the front of the warehouse. Layfon chased behind, running along the roof's edge. The small attacker's figure was in his sights.

Fast..... but not a speed he couldn't follow. If he enhanced his vision with Kei to make out the appearance of the target, he could ponder on how to apprehend the subject.

There was just one more thing. That sudden squall that rendered the net useless was not something natural.

(One more person, where is he hiding?)

Surely even now, he is probably hiding with his presence suppressed nearby. Scanning the area while running, he had a feeling that the target was in the immediate vicinity, but exactly where he could not pinpoint.

(Somehow, they aimed for that opportunity)

If they aimed for it, now what? Layfon ran while pondering, expanding his field of vision while following the target.

Running at full speed, the fleeing presence didn't appear as though it would change direction.

(If things proceed at this rate.....)

The Warehouse district appeared to be constructed adjoined to the Manufacturing district. For a split second, his field of vision shifted forward.

(He chose a quiet area.....?)

Just as he was thinking that, he approached closer to the target from behind. This left Layfon perturbed.

"Tsk."

It seemed about ready to begin.

Hostile intent from behind, and the raider fled right out underfoot. As much as he would like to, he wouldn't be able to handle both parties.

(What should I do?)

In that moment of hesitation, a new presence had appeared from a different direction.

"Here!"

He didn't think it was an ally. Layfon swung his sword towards his front. A burst of Kei shot from the tip of the blade and upon meeting something, exploded. The new presence had shot their own external Kei burst. The explosion scattered through the air. Layfon, as if part of it, flew. Their aim was that rear presence.

The approaching enemy would be easier to capture. That's what he thought, but.....

".....Eh?"

Dashing forward in the midst of repositioning himself in midair , Layfon sensed the rear presence retreating.

"Like I'd let you escape!"

While Layfon readjusted his balance, the presence threw something in his direction. Layfon fired a burst of Kei in its direction, intercepting the object.

"Cra.....!"

Halting his charge, Layfon prepared himself for the impending attack under the effect of the lingering afterimage.

But it never came.

The unknown presence had used the situation to flee.

"They got me....."

All three of the unknown presences had left without a trace, leaving him crestfallen.

That night, after debriefing, Layfon parted with Formed's group, but didn't immediately head home. Tearing his glance away from the dejected appearance of Naruki and company, he turned in the direction of the dorms and started walking. With the moon, almost completely engulfed in clouds, the path was lit with only the street lamps. Layfon, walking silently, was able to make out a shadow in the orange light of a street lamp.

"I couldn't have imagined that he could spot me from there."

The surprised figure raised its voice

"I didn't think you'd be able to notice me from here. I'm not being conceited."

The large frame with light shining down on it, appearing to not move an inch, responded.

"What is going on? That was....."

"Don't say it."

Due to the large frame, Gorneo's physique was disproportional to his attractive face.

"But....."

"You don't have anything to do with it. .....Is what I'd like to say , but I can't."

Gorneo's words were clearly filled with repugnance.

"Then, as I thought"

"That's right, that was Shante."

On top of warehouse D17, Layfon reliably confirmed the appearance of the raider with his enhanced sight. A figure with red hair fluttering as though from a bonfire, there was no mistaking it.

"Why?"

"I don't know either."

Gorneo regretfully shook his head.

"Beginning a few days ago, she hasn't been going back to her room. My search ended here, good grief....."

In this state of affairs, it appeared as though he wasn't able to capture Shante.

"So from the rear, that was?"

So that new presence on Shante's path was Gorneo. Layfon realized what that Kei technique that attacked him was.

So then, who was the presence that approached from behind.....

"About that. That wasn't my opener."

With the involvement of the fifth platoons members, Gorneo would have just declared it. Trusting him, Layfon nodded.

"But I thought those movements looked familiar though."

There was another thing.

Above all else, even if Layfon were able to catch Shante, the presence behind was moving to interfere.

Understanding that the person before him was Gorneo, the figure

that took him by surprise seemed only there to serve as a distraction, and Layfon noticed that the figure was not persistent about the action and fled just as easily.

Moreover, there was the issue of the flashbomb used. The item that used light and sound to disorient the enemy. He couldn't see a general studies student or even an ordinary Military Arts Students capable of causing this much damage.

In the case of platoon members, even if they could apply to set up a platoon match with the intention of using it as a trap, they would not be able deceive the management nor would they be able to carry out the plan outside of the fields.

"Covert military artists from other cities. If you think about it, it's somehow appropriate."

Gorneo came to that conclusion. Of Grendan's military families, the fame of the Luckens household which had turned out two Heaven's Blades couldn't possibly be hidden. With Grendan's history along with his origins in the Luckens family, an unspoken feud was brewing under the appearance of city camaraderie, one beyond Layfon's understanding.

"And about Shante's objective?"

"That I don't know. Her upbringing was unique, but she's still an orphan. If she does have an objective, I can't fathom what it could be."

"Shante's birthplace?"

"It's the Sea of Forests City Erupa."

After hearing that, Layfon went on to tell Gorneo of the thing at the warehouse.

"Heartseer fruit.....I've never heard of it, but there should be a reason why Shante's so persistent about it. I can't think of her being interested in the Kei Accelerating Drug's properties, though. There must be some sort of connection."

"It's a habit, so is that it?"

"Since she was raised by beasts for a short while or so I heard, the Heartseer fruit may have attracted a part of her instincts. However, with just that, it was able to seize her attention."

"It would probably be better to leave further investigation to the City Police."

"However if we do that, I'm sure that Shante would be pinned as the culprit. After keeping it under wraps, we couldn't bring it up now."

If word had gotten out that Shante was involved in the warehouse raid, forcing her to drop out wouldn't be the only consequence. Shante is the main force of the fifth platoon. One of Gorneo's principal duties was the development of his team, yet the fifth platoon may be dissolved as a result.

"No matter how you look at it, this will get out sooner or later. More importantly, I think it would be a good idea for us to look for

any tools she used. Formed is a reasonable and hardworking person. Rather than keeping it a secret, it would be better to collaborate."

"......You bastard, why do you go through so much just to trouble me?"

Layfon and Gorneo had a history between them. When he was still in Grendan, Layfon was responsible for seriously injuring Gorneo's senior beyond recovery. That caused Layfon to leave Grendan, with Gorneo, who was already in Zuellni at the time, finding out soon after.

Having injured his senior beyond recovery, Gorneo held a grudge against Layfon.

Thus, simply having this conversation exemplified the gravity of Gorneo's predicament.

Gazing at him with what seemed to be a doubtful gaze, Layfon only replied with a bitter smile.

"I think our commanding officer wouldn't want the 5th platoon disbanded."

"......That's, the current you?"

After muttering that reply, Gorneo let out a sigh and proceeded to nod in assent.

Van Allen's Day. The appointed day had come.

That morning, while Layfon had just finished preparing and set out, along with Naruki, Meishen and company also showed up.

"Morning. What's wrong?"

The reason why he didn't come to class already became the subject of conversation. Speaking with the other two, Layfon merely kept his head bowed while keeping Naruki's circumstances in mind.

"Here, I brought refreshments."

With that said, she held out a basket.

"It's lunchtime, so go ahead and eat."

With Mifi grinning broadly from behind, Meishen's face was bright red, while Layfon gratefully received it.

"Thanks."

After Meishen returned to Mifi's side hanging her head in shame, Layfon inquired about something he had just remembered.

"Do you know about a shop by the name of Rinka?"

"Rinka?"

Having been asked, Meishen, looking as though she were searching her memory, opened her eyes.

"I think it's probably a confectionary shop, but....."

It was a shop that ordered the production of the Heartseer fruit, but the full details were unknown. They ordered it for the coming of Van Allen's day, therefore there seems to be no mistake that it's the shop's purpose of making sweets from what Meishen told him. He guessed that Naruki had checked the address and so forth.

Suddenly, Mifi clapped her hands together.

"Ah, I remember now. When Nakki wasn't around, we went to that shop. It wasn't there around the time of the entrance ceremony ."

"Ah....."

Having just remembered, Meishen nodded in assent many times over.

"What kind of shop was it?"

"It looked like a cafe that only served cake and tea. But....."

"So-mehow, it seemed like they had no motivation."

"Yeah."

"No motivation?"

"That's right. The cakes seemed like they were made because they had to, and in spite of that the tea wasn't even very good. It was an ordinary shop. There didn't seem to be any regulars, and it felt like they had a lot of free time."

"There weren't any other customers, and it felt really hard to stay."

In response to the nodding pair, Layfon and Naruki's eyes met.

"That's strange."

Arriving at yesterday's meeting place in the warehouse district, They relayed Meishen's group's conversation to Formed.

"I haven't heard anything of Rinka's shopkeeper being strange. Even now that guy hasn't had any motivation, but now of all times with Van Allen's day coming, if he was making a new product, I was thinking that he was just using a low profile ingredient like the Heartseer fruit."

Even if Formed had an extremely short bout of laziness, the thought was possible.

"It's not just that," Naruki added.

"The manufacturing district were said to have put in the request for that quantity, to which only the agricultural department could fill. I can't imagine Rinka's proceeds alone being enough for it."

"Information on the Heartseer's genetic makeup, how and when someone in the city managed to obtain it troubles me. Hmm..... Has the investigation into Rinka bee resolved?"

After Formed had dismissed his subordinate, he once again met with Layfon and the others.

"Good grief, this has gotten serious."

Formed's gaze shifted for a second slightly off from Layfon's position to where Gorneo stood. In addition to Gorneo, another Military Arts student wearing the badge of the 5th platoon also stood. Layfon recognized him from the time when they were searching the abandoned city. The 5th platoon's Psychokinesist.

Out of all of the platoon members, Shante far outstripped the competition in agility. To catch her, it would be better to have the cooperation of a Psychokinesist, and last night, agreeing to consult with Gorneo, he was called out to that spot.

"The 5th platoon is the source of Zuellni's problems this time. Work hard to minimize the impact."

"Sorry"

To Formed's remark, Gorneo lowered his head.

"We are all working for this city. Keep that in mind."

Formed waved his hand, grinning broadly.

"So, I'm having you help out."

At this point, Formed forced Gorneo into a situation where he would owe him a favor. When it's important, borrowing the strength of platoon members is huge. Without a doubt, the rapture reached Formed's core.

Noticing this, Gorneo's stiff facial expression relaxed slightly and became that of a wry smile.

"But that's also....."

That would be a conversation for when the case closed.

"Now then, I'll have you do this just like we decided yesterday."

Cutting Gorneo off, Formed announced the start of the operation.

The Heartseer fruit would be carried away in the afternoon. A large quantity of the fruit was being returned to the manufacturing district where it would converted into fertilizer at a processing plant.

If there was any movement, it would have to be before the transporting of the fruits to the manufacturing district or possibly during the transporting. As a unique fruit, a specimen had already been sent to one of the agricultural department's lab. This was of course to find out how to process it into fertilizer. In preparation for that result, they had to find out the optimal location for its destination. In that time frame, there was the possibility of a raid.

Even though Shante had selected the same time of day for the two failed raids on the warehouse, Gorneo could have confidently stated that Shante would not even consider that. However, he couldn't believe that she had.

Meanwhile, at the library, the city police researched how The Sea of Forests City Erupa treated the Heartseer fruit along with Shante's circumstances of being raised by wild beasts. However, with regards to the impending raid, that added information would probably have little bearing.

That being said, after all is said and done, Gorneo awaited Shante's judgement.....

With what they were aiming for, their departure would be fixed .

"Oh, this looks delicious."

Naruki, stepping away from the area where Formed had relaxed his face after looking at the contents of the basket, nervously sat down.

"Hey! .....What're you doing?"

"Um..... I said I hadn't prepared lunch since I thought you were inviting me for lunch."

In the basket, there appeared to be too much food for two people to eat, and remembering back to the other day, there was also that conversation. As expected, there was no limit to his thickheadedness.

"Really now.....Rather than looking to someone else for something, look to yourself."

"Eh?"

"Nothing."

"Hey, are we eating?"

With Formed rubbing his hands together while staring intently at the contents, the pair ceased their whispering.

Normally, sandwiches were perfect while working. However, the bread of these were thin, grilled and were in the shape of a

pocket, and in addition had been filled with a variety of ingredients that none could pick out.

Chewing released a rich flavor that spread throughout the mouth.

Formed continued eating while iterating "delicious, delicious."

Layfon felt Meishen's cooking skill vastly improve before him.

"Chief, try a bit of this as well."

After Formed had finished his first sandwich, Naruki had the next item ready for him. Meishen being involved in the preparation meant that not many could deny that the appearance was fair. The bread on this one was burnt at the center.

"Hmm? Oh, thanks."

After receiving it, Formed took a bite into it.

"Mm.....Hmm?"

Formed wore a difficult expression. Layfon realized Naruki had a strained expression on her face as if the situation was eating into her.

"A bit sour, but it gets the job done."

After saying that, he consumed it with the same tempo.

Naruki kept a relaxed expression.

At the arranged time, the freight car pulled up in front, along the exterior of the warehouse.

Many officers carried a heavy bag to be stowed in the cargo hold, meanwhile Layfon was hidden in a separate area overlooking the situation. Aside from those loading up the cargo, the others were scattered about in wait with bated breath.

Making contact at this point was the fifth platoon's Psychokinesist.

(Will they come?)

While concealing his body, Layfon considered the problem. During the second raid, Shante was probably aware of the trap setup.

(Maybe not.)

Using normal judgement, they should be doing that. However, Gorneo relayed that Shante's condition was abnormal. In addition, there were the unidentified Military Artists.

(It's not good to drop your guard.)

On that note, suddenly, a voice belonging to a senpai who shouldn't be there reached Layfon's ears.

(Fon fon.....)

"Wha! .....Felli?"

Suppressing his voice and surveying the vicinity, he inquired in a low voice.

(What are you doing right now?)

"Part time work for the City Police....."

In Felli's case, while thinking that she already verified the situation, he responded.

(For the City Police?.....What is it this time?)

Remarkably, Felli showed an interest. While thinking 'I don't really have much time,' Layfon began briefing. Though he thought telling Felli to what extent the fifth platoon was involved was unnecessary, if she showed any interest, she would soon find out anyway. It was better just to tell her.

"Well.....then"

He summarized the situation until now. Thinking about it, Felli and Shante weren't really on good terms.

'Did I make a mistake?'

Though he thought that, Felli showed no interest in Shante.

(I see..... Shall I help?)

However, she responded without hesitation.

"Eh?"

The unexpected proposal caught Layfon off guard. Hating being a Psychokinesist of the Military Arts Department, to offer a helping hand in a City Police mission was just.....

(Would my assistance not be necessary?)

"That, that's not it. Well, how do I say this, this time the circumstances are special, so it wouldn't be up to my discretion..... "

(So tiresome..... What is it? Would it be alright if you just talked to that underclassman from before?)

"It's not that simple....."

(Then what would you do?)

Becoming confused in that petulant atmosphere, the fifth platoon's Psychokinesist connection interrupted.

"Ah, wait one moment, sorry."

Having Felli wait, he listened to the Psychokinesist's communication.

(Target apprehension team: quickly converging on Warehouse District Area E)

"Woah, is that true?"

To come now..... while surprised that Gorneo's information was true, Layfon summoned his Internal Kei.

(What happened?)

"Sorry, I'm in a hurry, got to go..... Ah, please pass on that it looks like I won't be able to make it to training today."

(Ah!)

No sooner than he started to speak, giving the message to pass over to Nina, he had already vacated the area. If Layfon faced Shante at warehouse D17 where she was supposedly headed and stood on the wrong rooftop, the rush tactic could be used. To begin with, the warehouse where he hid himself was quite far from the warehouse in question. He wasn't hidden to catch Shante.

"Did you find it?"

(No sign of that presence.)

It was the reply of a frank Psychokinesist, however seeing that Shante was on the move, he felt that the presence would soon be nearby.

(If the tactic is a stealth rush, it would be a contest of timing.)

Layfon focused his senses. An intense sound reached Layfon's ears. The freight car the Heartseer fruit was carried on flipped end-over-end. The earsplitting roar of the metal body sundering the earth could be heard even from that distance. The on-board City Police officers, being also Military Artists, wouldn't be harmed by such an incident.

(The plan was a success.)

With the Psychokinesist's words, another type of ruckus arose from the suppressed atmosphere.

Canceling Sakkei, Internal-type Kei was once again routed.

(Response detected!)

In response to that strained voice, Layfon leapt after adopting a crouching stance.

His movement was instantaneous.

With a force powerful enough to crack the warehouse roof, he landed before the shadow.

"Today, there's no escape."

While pressuring the Military Artist shrouded in black, Layfon felt the presence of another suspicious object.

However, Layfon moved in position to bar their route, halting all movement, at which point he was being surrounded.

Abandoning all notions of capturing Shante, Layfon elected to run interference. Shante's objective remained unclear, however in order to escape a roaming bus was necessary. In that moment, Layfon judged interference would net results.

The Military Artist standing before him wore a similar combat uniform to theirs, with the addition of a black cloth used to cover the face with a strange mask resembling a beast worn over it. The eyes of the mask had a glint that probably signified installed glass panels. Near the lumbar, aside from the sword belt, hung some type of ammunition.

He restored the Sapphire Dite. Blue sunlight radiated off of the blade.

The Military Artist also unsheathed his Dite and restored it. They were both swords, however this blade was more like a saw. If that blade connected, it seemed as if it would gouge out flesh.

"Your name?"

"Wolf Face."

The voice, as if run through a voice converter, responded.

"Show us the true strength of Grendan's Heaven's Blade Successors."

"Former.....that is."

While surprised by the knowledge of his circumstances, Layfon cautiously raised his sword. The Military Artist known as the Wolf Face leveled his sword, adopting a thrusting stance. The saw blade was probably capable of snapping its opponent's weapons.

A much stronger presence enveloped him, quickly applying pressure to Layfon.

The opponent took the initiative.

Though killing intent surged from bladepoint, Layfon put his strength behind a right slant of his sword.

In that instant, the empty left hand flashed.

Before Layfon's eyes, several glinting orbs were flung at him.

Layfon and the Wolf Face became engulfed in light and a thunderous roar.

His surroundings bleached, Layfon, relying only on the approaching sense of bloodthirst, swung his sword vertically down.

A thud resounded behind him.

He noticed an odd change in the surrounding environment. The overpowering killing intent that surrounded Layfon diminished.

Upon opening his eyes, Layfon found himself surrounded by colleagues of the fallen military artist, all of whom had a similar appearance.

At the time the flash grenade was thrown, Layfon immediately shut his eyes. If not directly seared, internal Kei could immediately restore eyesight. Nevertheless, it wouldn't make it in time to meet that thrust.

Wolf Faces..... Probably a name to associate them all.

After already restoring his eyes, Layfon noticed them trembling.

"Stay or run, choose whichever you'd like."

"....."

After a brief silence, the Wolf Faces picked up their fallen comrade and seemingly erased themselves from existence.

In response to that receding presence, Layfon stowed his Dite.

Would it be better to give it sooner?

In the middle of last night's discussion, Layfon had carelessly disclosed the core strategy in fatigue.

How did Shante know that the Heartseer fruit was stored in that warehouse? It would be easy to think that the so called Wolf Face squad had briefed her, and in that case and time, it would be good to just capture her. Normally, only one student would be left on guard. There were boundless opportunities for both contact and capture.

Wouldn't considering Shante's own sense of smell also be fine? Regularly at one o'clock after sunset, Shante would go out on her own, both Gorneo and her housemates knew. Others knowing wouldn't be strange in the least.

Her upbringing under the care of beasts still had a strong influence for her, Shante's five senses were enhanced through Kei beyond the capacity of a normal person.

Even the blackest night wouldn't obstruct that vision.

What if there was a being that could detect the faint smell of the Heartseer fruit leaking from the warehouse district?

What if that being were charmed by that scent leading to this impromptu raid?

If that's the case, Shante's bid for the Heartseer fruit were for self-centered reasons or alternatively acting completely on instinct, both of which would result from a low priority to risk from an abused risk assessment process.

".....What the?"

Standing before the results of that plan, Layfon could only murmur that statement.

"Nyan nyan♪"

From around the sundered freight car, skins of the Heartseer fruit were scattered all over the road.

"Nyan nyan nyan♪"

On top of the heartseer fruit, Shante, having seriously feasted on what amounted to an emperor's meal, lay rolling around with a delighted expression on her face.

Dumbfounded, Formed and Gorneo's groups could only stand there looking on in shock.

"Nyan nyan nyan nyan♪"

"On another note, this seems like it's something along the lines of a delighted pet."

"......You said it." Naruki could only mutter, looking drained, to which Formed nodded in assent.

Upon arrival, Formed whispered into the ear of what looked to be the City Police investigative student.

"Is that so..... So, what's the situation on Rinka?"

"Even though it's still early, Rinka was not open. However, we brought a shopkeeper we saw in for questioning."

"Hmm....."

"What is it?"

Hearing Naruki, Layfon's group noticed wrinkles collecting on Formed's brow.

"That girl.....is in heat."

"What?"

At Formed's scandalous words, everyone could only stare blankly. Formed let out a sigh and prompted a report from the student whom had just arrived.

"Yes. Right..... Though Shante was merely brought up by beasts , her unique circumstances cause her sexual excitement under certain situations. That is the Heartseer fruit. Originally for use in reproductive problems, if the Heartseer fruit's excitatory effects are used, it's said it wouldn't necessarily be....."

While observing Shante, still laying on a bed of Heartseer fruit, the student had something incredibly difficult to say left in his conversation.

Formed took over.

"Having said she was raised by beasts, I don't think she inherited their constitution..... technically speaking."

However according to her size, Shante was still young in age. As additional proof, Military Artists also had senses that far and away surpassed normal people.

With the appearance of a person, the abilities of a Military Artist and inheriting the instincts of the beasts she was raised by, truly a life taking human form.

Though somewhat of a demi-human, it should still be possible to call her back, but would it appropriate for Shante.

"In the end, it's that."

"It's that, isn't it."

"Good grief....."

With Naruki and Formed nodding side by side, Gorneo let out a long sigh.

"This is where you've been after causing all this trouble..... Shante!"

Gorneo raised his already resounding voice to a yell.

On doing so, Shante who had been rolling on top of the pile of Heartseer fruits stopped moving. Her sharp gaze fell on Gorneo.

In the next moment.....

"Owoo.....SHAAAAA!"

"Wha, Whoa!"

In that instant, Shante howled, and from that spot vaulted over the entire company that had her surrounded and tumbled onto the ground. Layfon somehow managed to recover from the shock, meanwhile something happened causing sand to swirl in the air, causing him to squint his eyes. Gorneo who had been closest, had fallen on his backside and remained there.

".....Huh?"

In front of them, Shante was no longer there.

In her place, another woman stood. With long, red hair extending to her back, she was a tall, sensual woman. They thought she was sensual, but how they knew, the answer to that was simple.

That woman wasn't wearing clothes.

There were ruins of clothing, but they were scattered atop the Heartseer fruit.

On all fours, the woman began to stretch. That beautiful face with her eyes opened wide threw her red hair with a toss of her head. All conduct lacking any sense of shame, the woman raised up her chest at which her ripe, dangling fruit swayed. Completely red-faced after ten seconds of that destructive power, Layfon turned his head away.

"Shante.....?" The still fallen Gorneo murmured.

"Eh?"

He couldn't believe it for even an instant. However unless through sleight of hand, there was no way Shante who had been there until now had disappeared and in her place swapped with this naked woman.

Nevertheless, Shante would be able to ride on Gorneo's large frame, but the transformation into a beautiful woman who stood equal in stature was an unbelievable physical phenomenon.

Simply considering the significance of childbearing, well beyond the capabilities of that small body, this current figure could be up to the challenge.

Also, Layfon noted that the Heartseer fruit had side effects similar to the Kei Accelerating Drug.

If certain manufacturing techniques were not implemented, the result would not be the same as the Kei Accelerating drug, however it was certain that the fruit was a critical ingredient in the drug. Under normal circumstances the ordinary person certainly could not reach the same level of effectiveness, Shante's keen intuition told her that if she took it and sped up her Kei vein's rate. .....

"Shante's Kei vein.....is normally restricted?"

"......What do you mean?"

"Shante right now doesn't have the feeling of the unreasonable Kei flow rate of a Kei acceleration drug user. That is to say in Shante's case, her current condition shows no abnormalities."

If the Kei vein is restricted, it is consequently possible that the body's growth is also stunted.

"In short, you're saying Shante's previous state was a disorder.... ..? Certainly, at that age that physique was abnormal....."

Gorneo groaned while looking in Shante's direction, at which point he averted his eyes. Because of Shante in her beautiful nude figure and lacking any semblance of shame, he trembled.

While Layfon also averted his eyes, he pondered.

(It cant be, those guys also knew?)

That's why they targeted Shante?

This strange phenomenon's reason was Shante's genes -- with no other possibilities to consider -- this wouldn't be strange to those who knew.

Thinking along those lines.....

"Fuu!"

Once Shante realized Gorneo was nearby, her eyes shone brilliantly.

"O, Oi!"

"Fushaaaaaaaaaa!!"

Without warning.

Shante sprung at Gorneo, grabbed the lapel of his shirt in her mouth and leaped. That beautiful woman leaving a mark like a beast, unlike when she did it in her smaller form, had a deadly impact to which even Layfon could not move.

Frankly, it was a little scary.

"Gufu!"

Strangled by his lapel, Gorneo let out one last groan before the pair entered the interior of the warehouse district, disappearing into the orchard. Staring vacantly off, not even thinking about the current events, the silence of the surrounding environment continued.

"Have to finalize everything....." Formed muttered just as he used up his last bit of energy. "After consuming the Heartseer fruit , Shante had gone into heat and out of goodwill awaited capture on the spot, where to begin....."

"Was that.....how it went?"

Lacking confidence, Layfon tilted his neck.

".....If so, won't we have to pursue them?"

".....We won't."

Formed responded to Naruki's question with a tired voice.

Later, whether leaving to drop in on Gorneo, to check in on the subject of her growth, or whether or not Layfon's predictions were correct, with his physical abilities showing marked improvement, with the fifth platoon's Psychokinesist having only capture abilities , he required Felli's collaboration.

The next day, Shante reverted back to her original size. Facing reality, they turned to both the medical department and the alchemy department to investigate, though at the moment they failed to catch her once.

Sweet Day - Sweet Before III

When Mifi woke up, there were two faces of those who had pulled all-nighters.

"What'cha doin'?"

"Well....,"

"Something....,"

Even while half-asleep, Mifi could tell they were trying to hide something from their words.

"Did, did you finish it?"

"U...mu[1]...,"

"Well, somehow."

If she remembered correctly, Meishen said she was making Layfon's and Naruki's bentos because they had to skip school to help the municipal police. She's was definitely making that.

But Meishen didn't need an all-nighter to make bentos. That's because even if today is Van Allen Day, Layfon will eat any bento she makes.

So that means, today's case would be Naruki.

Honestly, Mifi could only see a boring old man senpai but Naruki was probably fine with it.

"Uwaa-"

She couldn't stop yawning. Mifi was also preparing her manuscript till it was late last night, and fell asleep from tiredness.

"Well, I'm going ahead."

While Mifi was whistling, the dressed up Naruki called out to them. There was not a trace of fatigue on her face. It was during these times that Mifi was envious of a military artist's stamina.

As Naruki went out, Meishen was washing her face. As expected, she can't wash away the fatigue of an all-nighter. It seems that even the power of love can't erase an all-nighter's dark shadows.

Mifi too, wanted to go back to sleep. She could just give the excuse that she handed it in after school.

"Layton is not here, so are you trying to cheat on him this morning?"

"N-No, I'm not."

At Mifi's words, Meishen stuttered a bit and escaped by going to the washroom to wash her face.

"Well that can't be helped, I better go too-"

For now she decided to go to her own room and ready her bag.

"Huh...?"

Unintentionally realizing, Mifi became terrified.

"Now that I think about it, I don't have anyone to give to."

Becoming aware of that reality, Mifi felt slightly lonelier that morning.

A Day For You 3

That day, Nina was passing time in the silence of the military arts training hall.

"Fuuh,"

Ending her usual training, Nina steadied her breath before wiping her sweat with a towel. In stopping her training and just as she was enveloped by the silence, the mischief of comfort surged forward. Feeling different from the usual atmosphere, Nina knitted her eyebrows and looked around.

With the exception of Nina, there was no one from the 17th platoon here. Layfon notified her yesterday that he would rest today and Sharnid suddenly said that he had to take the day off. Furthermore, she didn't have Felli's contact number (Felli didn't give it to her). It wasn't necessary to maintain the Dite everyday so Harley wasn't here.

"Mattaku...,"[2]

While she grumbled, she was once again thought of what day today was.

Today was Van Allen's day.

The queer culture where one gives sweets to another instead of confessing their love was not peculiar in Zuellni. Last year, the

guys from the commerce department who ran the confectionery-related shops got to know other cities' culture, and then ran a grand campaign out of it.

Just because the generation (age group) most interested in romance had gathered, the students had fun and took that in custom, and so this year, that day has come again.

"Mattaku...,"

After muttering it again, Nina threw down her towel, standing alone at the center of the training room, and started generating Kei to resume training her stance.[3].

If it were the usual days, the soundproof partition would shake to the extent that the other platoon's training could be heard but today, that sound feels as if it is well-behaved.

Within the military arts department, a platoon member who possesses excellent talent will be elected. Furthermore, if the inter-platoon matches take place, the spectator seating of the battleground will be filled, and they are also popular enough that the matches will be linked through the monitors. It's to an extent where within that, people (participants) who are die-hard fans also exist.

"Now that I think about it, didn't it also feel the same last year too?"

While she was thinking how it was, a metal whip was swung and her stance was broken. Stopping her fall, she concentrated on her training once more.

"Don't think of unnecessary things!"

No matter how much of a militant artist she was, she was still a student. It was not possible to say she was not interested in love. Even if she was hit by the enthusiasm called Van Allen's Day which spurt out incessantly from her surroundings, she cannot be blamed for it.

But,

"I am who I am."

That has nothing to do with me. Placing those strong words in her heart, Nina started over from the beginning to retrain her form .

Until her usual training hours end, she repeated her form training and after that, Nina showered to wash away her sweat. She was off duty from cleaning the Central Mechanism Chamber today. Without considering of visiting any place, she thought of immediately returning to the dorm as she strode out of the main entranceway.

"Antalk-senpai!"

The sudden sound of the shrill voice surprised Nina. At the side of the main entranceway, a group of female students who were waiting in line quickly surrounded her.

"W-what is it?"

There was no hostility from the girls coming at Nina, but she could not think of a way to deal with the female students that swarmed over her with honest feelings. The bewildered her had lost her means of escape and incidentally, she was spoken to as if insults were hurled towards her.

"Senpai, I....."

"Senpai, please accept my feelings!"

"Um, this.....for senpai.."

"Please accept this!"

"Please eat this!"

At the things they simultaneously held out, Nina's eyes rounded. In the hands of the female students were objects with various kinds of ribbons wrapped around it that made them look fitting.

There was no need to imagine what the contents were.

".....Do all of you, know what day it is today?"

While feeling the cold sweat on the temple of her forehead, she asked.

"Yes we do!"

"We talked about it....."

"We didn't want to trouble Senpai..."

"It's not strange to give it to the person you admire too."

She sort of understood what they wanted to say. To differentiate the years or grades, the militant arts sector have different colours for the sword belt but the liberal arts sector have different coloured neckties, ribbons and etc. Since they all call her by Senpai then they must either be first or second year juniors.

(...Respect, you say?)

This was the question she had in mind. She had been told of such before. Most of them were from her juniors in the military arts sector, furthermore they were mostly girls. To the girls, as long as they (the lower year students) classifies them as third year students, becoming a platoon member and in addition a captain too will most likely gain their respect, is what Nina was told and was able to agree to.

But, these girls were students of the general studies sector and have nothing to do with military arts. And also, their glances at Nina carried the feeling that it had a little too much respect for her.

(What a strange situation)

She thought of that but in the end, she lost to their zeal and accepted the sweets. As a result from being dumbfounded for a while, Nina looked at the back of her juniors who were happily leaving but-

"Well it's not like I'm the only one who received presents."

As she thought of that, she started to move her feet.

Suddenly, Nina felt a glance from the side of her face. Not moving her face, she scanned her surroundings for any presences. There wasn't any person. But, there was a glance that felt as if it caressed her cheeks and continued to monitor her.

(That's strange)

That was what she thought.

Because somebody was hiding while secretly examining Nina, that look felt like it was rudely facing her. For example, it is like when an acquaintance found her just now, and while she hesitates whether or not it is fine to greet him, she just looks at him. That sort of feeling.

(There's still someone hiding?)

There might have been a person who did not mix in with the group of underclassmen just now.

"Is anyone there?"

Standing still, Nina called out to the surroundings. She felt the look on her right cheek. Over there was a small mound due to tree-planting, and the evening filled with the gloomy silence seemed to last.

The plant was obstructing her field of vision, but there was no sign of anybody.

"That was strange.....was it just my imagination?"

Tilting her neck, Nina walked away again. The parcels of sweets she was carrying with both her arms looked like they were about to collapse.

(Today, it's faster to go home by walking)

After deciding that, she turned her legs to the direction of the now moundless branching road towards the bus stop.

"Ahahahahahahaha!"

The moment she saw Nina come back to the dorm, Leu immediately made a conjecture of the situation and then gave out a loud, hearty laugh.

"Wha-, it's not something to laugh about."

She thought so, however with her cheeks turning red, Nina personally became incredibly flustered and therefore everything she said lost all merit.

"But.....that's definitely from girls. Fu-.....ahahahahaha!"

Holding her stomach with both her arms, even now Leu who seemed like she was going to fall off from rolling about on the sofa that functions as a reception office lounge was given a glower. But quickly, after the sweets were placed on the fruitless[4], Nina sat down on the sofa used for interviewing purposes.

"It's not like I asked for any presents."

She murmured while puffing up her cheeks.

"Well, well. You received a lot didn't you, ne ~ "

Over there was Selina who came after finishing dinner's preparation. She gazed at the piled up boxes of sweets on the table with great interest and, with a gentle stretch of her hand on one of them, it opened on its own accord.

"Aa, Selina-san....."

"Ye ~ s?"

"Well, those are mine....."

For the time being, Nina was mannerable towards the group of girls who gave her the chocolate. She thought of it that way, but Selina took out the contents without showing an ounce of care.

The cookies for the important day were crammed in the small box.

"Fu ~ n....."

"Selina-san?"

Without having any indication of eating it, Selina who slipped the cookie between her fingers and seemed to hold it up to the light, then let out an "Ei" while spliting the cookie into two halves.

"Uhyaa!"

The one who gave out that shriek was Leu.

The moment Selina split the cookie, along with the fragments that were pulverised, something black came falling out.

"W-why?"

Leu directed that question to everyone in the room[5]. Nina also fell down on the table, as she widened her eyes the moment she saw the dangling object from the cross section of the cookie.

She can't be mistaken about it. It was a person's hair.

The long strings of hairs that fell on the table were attached and coiled here and there within the fragments of the cookie, which made Nina and Leu tremble.

"Oh, my"

"Wha-what is this?"

To the Selina who let out a calm voice, Nina asked.

"Well, I thought 'there might be some chance' but it seems there are people who would really do it,"

"So, what is it?"

Leu also asked very irritatedly.

"Well you know ~ as Van Allen's day was nearing, a strange good luck charm had been becoming popular,"

"Good luck charm?"

Hearing words they couldn't believe, both of them stared Selina's face.

"Mmm, I wonder if it's okay to say it's a method to grant a person's wishes?I don't know whether there is or isn't but it's said to rely on a supernatural power..... Well, it's a charm to allow the person whom you love to have feelings for you by eating a part of your body."

"So, the hair?"

"That seems to be the case. By no means, would a person go to the extent of offering their own flesh so there's no one like that."

"It's troublesome even if you say so."

Immediately while she was answering, Nina thought maybe the other sweets were the same too.

If it was like that, then she wouldn't want to eat it anymore.

"Hey, hey, is it ok if I check it out?"

"Please do it when I'm not here."

To Selina's request, Nina wearily replied.

And, a doubt had arisen as Selina seemed excessively happy while carrying the rest of the boxes of sweets in her arms.

".....It couldn't be, the one who made it popular was not Selina-san, right?"

"No ~ , I only heard about it"

"Wait, from who!?"

Because she admitted it so easily, conversely, Nina was surprised.

"Because a friend of mine from the study of law said she wanted to know the statistics of males and females whom sought others for help, so I just taught her 'these kinds of things do happen ~ ' The ultimate good will is to adapt to the other party, the part of letting your partner eat a part of you is, so to speak, sour grapes."

".....Tomorrow for sure, if there is a large outbreak of food poisoning cases then it is Selina-san's fault."

"Mou ~ [6], something like that won't happen. Oh, yeah."

Selina hit her hands as she thought of a bright idea.

"As an apology for surprising you, let me teach you a good luck charm."

".....What is it?"

"A charm to ensure the safety of the person you love."

"Whaa.....until now it's rare to hear words that doesn't suit Selina-san."

"Ah, that's mean ~ ."

At Leu's words, Selina puffed up her cheeks.

"I wonder what person who say their loved ones are guinea pigs[7] is saying....."

"Fuuun. Then I won't teach it to you"

"Eeh, I don't really mind"

"If Leu-chan's boyfriend does not become a platoon member next year too, I was going to make it 'because Leu-chan didn't have enough love for him.'"

"Buho-"

At Selina's unexpected words, Leu spat out her unfinished tea and Nina's eyes rounded.

"Wha, wha, wha....."

"Leu.....you had a boyfriend?"

Precisely because that sort of frivolous feeling was somewhat showing an unknown side of Leu, it was surprising.

"That's wrong! It's not like that!"

Even if she denies it, her face was becoming bright red and she was disturbed by it so her argument lost merit.

"He was a former classmate, that was all."

"Then was it someone I also knew?"

Nina and Leu were in the same class during their first year. As she was trying to remember the faces of the military arts department of that time, a loud voice interrupted her.

"You don't have to remember it!"

"Leu.....that's like admitting it, he is somebody from when we were first years."

"Uu....."

Realising her own blunder, Leu let out a moan.

"Yes, ye ~ s. That's why, I'll teach you a charm to wish for Leu-chan and Nina-chan's boyfriend's safety as a military artist."

Yesterday too, Selina tried to coax Nina to make her sweets for Layfon.

"Well well, I will leave that for now so listen. That charm is....."

Selina lowered her voice. While Leu made a chagrin-filled face, she also sharpened her ears at those words and Nina was also naturally, bringing her face closer to Selina.

"......Of..... that, is what I'm giving you."

When Selina finished talking, both of their faces reddened. Similarly, both of them had their thighs neatly joint together, and were pinning down their skirts with their hands.

"It's the same as (what I said) just now, y'know ~ . By letting your partner take a part of yourself, which resides in a place that isn't easily shown to others, you deliver your feelings which wishes for their safety. All the Military Artists in our city do this, y'know."

"That's definitely a lie!"

Nina and Leu aligned their voices and denied it.

After finishing dinner, Nina went out of the dorm alone. With a

sword belt coiled at her waist, stuck closely to the upper part of the trainer's body was a jacket which she put on as she left the dorm. She would do this on the days without the machine cleaning duty. She would end up thinking she did not move her body enough.

Nearby her dorm where the three of them lived was the architectural department's practise area, where there were buildings that were either under construction or in the middle of demolition everywhere. Nina confirmed the empty plot of land which she was aiming for from the window of her room.

At the center of the bare ground stood Nina. As she was trying to pull out her Dite from her sword belt, her hand stopped.

(Again.....)

Again, she felt a glance. It was the same when she returned home from the military practice hall. She did not felt any hostility, but not knowing that person's true intentions was uncomfortable.

"What do you want?"

Immediately spiting out her irritation, she examined the surrounding atmosphere.

"I don't remember being tailed."

Now if he didn't answer, before the stare was the release of external Kei. With that decision, she awaited the other party's reply.

"Wait, wait. I'm not your enemy."

Whether he sensed her presence or not, a reply came quickly. From the darkness the figure that appeared as if it was arising, was a student of military arts. From the colour of his sword belt he was of the highest grade, a sixth year. Underneath the red hair which seemed to be constantly in a mess, were eyes that will never let their guard down.

"What do you want?"

Without letting her vigilance down, Nina asked with her Dite ready to fall out at any moment. Although he is her senior, he is the person who has been tailing her since the evening. Whatever he's thinking of, she doesn't know.

"That's nice, that attitude."

The red-haired youth seemed to laugh enjoyably.

Against the provocative behavior the man showed, Nina gripped her Dite. But, he stopped.

(What's with this guy.....)

The youth with the aloof appearance who was pretending came closer to Nina. His hand was languidly lowered and he was walking in a shaky manner. Even though it wasn't a situation where one could let their guard down, he washed away the tense atmosphere.

If she attacked first she would lose. That was how she felt.

(I can do it)

The fact that a military artist that could force Nina to become this nervous is in Zuellni..... No, the fact that she did not know a person of this caliber until now, surprised her.

She has no recollection of the youth's face. That means he wasn't a platoon member.

"He has discerning eyes too. Fine, bring it on."

The youth who slowly walked until he was near, nodded to her with satisfaction.

"My name is Dixerio Maskane. Well, you could just call me Dix. What's yours?"

"Did you follow me without knowing it?"

"Well circumstances are circumstances.[8] I had no choice."

".....I'm Nina Antalk."

His circumstances piqued her interests, but she managed to save herself from being embroiled into it.

(Could he be masquerading as a student?)

She is aware that these type of people exist. There seems to be people who partake in Zuellni's lessons while not paying their fees .

However, these people make up the minority and they will also get found out quickly. The rest of the masquerading students are groups of thieves who come from other cities with the purpose of stealing research data and the likes.

(This man, is he that sort of person?)

Notwithstanding the existence of such a powerful person within the platoon members, to have not heard any rumors about him is strange. Nina's wariness was strengthened.

"Oh, it seems like I'm being suspected."

Whether he guessed it through her facial expression or not, even so, Dix connected his words with a look of enjoyment on his face.

"Then, how about this? Why don't you pose a question which asks me about a place only students in Zuellni would know?"

"Hmmm..... Well then."

"Aaa..... If it's possible, ask about a place that has been around since a long time ago."

"Why?"

"If it's new, then I may not know it. It's best if you ask one that is old and famous. As a request."

"Something so convenient..."

While she said that, Nina was thinking of a question as per Dix's request.

"Concerning the statue in the inner part of the first floor of the student council office building, it's pedestal has letters carved on it as a result of someone's prank since a long time ago. What is written there?"

"It's 'Seek it, if so then through sheer strength'."

Dix immediately replied while laughing with a broad grin.

"Next question. What was the original letters carved on the pedestal?"

"Seek and it shall be given."

Last year, those letters were still there, but this year the original words have been cleanly erased by the hands of the student council. Rather than the original words, what's left behind by the person who wrote the prank is that person who was the legendary top scorer of the martial arts department of Zuellni in the past.

Knowing this fact means that at the very least, he's not part of the recent bunch of people who are in concealment.

"Oh? So you're still suspicious of me."

She didn't mean to let it show on her face but she was seen through.

"Well, I'd never thought I could clear away your suspicions this way. Tell you what, if you'll listen to my request, I'll teach you my extraordinary technique as a prepayment."

"Technique, you say."

"I witnessed your practice at the military arts training hall. I liked your choice of harsh weapons like the twin iron whips. How about it?"

"....It depends on the technique."

"You'll definitely want it."

Right after he talked, Dix jumped to the back to gain distance from Nina. He straightened his sword belt with his hands. Nina reflexively drew her Dites and restored them.

Dix held iron whips in his hands. It's only one swing but it is by far bigger than Nina's. Nina observed that the metal whip is no longer within the range of a striking weapon to reach her.

"Then, here I come."

Nina generated her internal type Kei and the moment she looked, she saw movement from Dix's side. In that second, Dix left an afterimage and disappeared.

"Tch-"

(He's fast.)

On the spur of the moment, she jumped and dodged to the side. It was surely a timely judgement, as Dix appeared from the front, swinging down the iron whip onto where Nina was originally standing. Like an electric shock, the atmosphere trembled and it struck Nina's whole body.

"Oh, you dodged it."

Dix swung up his iron whip that hit the ground, and looked at Nina while seemingly carrying his shoulder.

"Watched you when you were training and, it seems that defense is your strong point. But you know, there are times when always being defensive amounts to nothing. Offense is the best defense. To dash in swiftly like an idiot unexpectedly feels like it fits your nature well."

Right after speaking, he lowered his back while the metal whip was placed on his shoulder.

Now, just as it seems, it is getting worked up.

(I can see it)

Just as how Layfon taught her, she poured Kei into her eyes which enabled her to see Dix's flow of Kei.

There were strong pulses of Kei and then, from the core of the metal whip were ripples forming which spread out towards the atmosphere. But, it was not caused by the diffusion of Kei, rather it would spread away until it reached a fixed distance and then a new flow, so to speak, will be made from the Kei pulses to the metal whip which will then flow from the metal whip to the Kei pulses, ultimately constructing an infinite loop.

The Kei circuit that had been built inside and outside of the body was strengthening the fast flow of internal Kei, while simultaneously the external Kei around the whip was being condensed.

"If you were to believe me, you just need to move a step forward without hesitating, and inflict a blow." Abruptly, Dix murmured.

"Those were the words of the old man who taught me martial arts."

At the same time he said those words, Dix's figure vanished.

This time, she sharpened her senses until the last second, to see what's occurring.

The infinite circulatory loop of Kei as if being dragged and torn to pieces changed its form, vanished as if sucked up by the leg and metal whip. The Kei sucked up by the leg seems to be for movement. Probably something close to whirl Kei. Then what about the metal whip?

But, she could not completely confirm it. She was already doing her best looking at the leg's movement. She could no longer escape as well. Both of Nina's metal whips were flung upwards by the trajectory of Dix's attack.

The three strikes from the metal whips dispersed fireworks from the collisions.

The equilibrium of the collisions was immediately destroyed.[9]

The impact and vibration ran through both her arms, her back and her whole body, Nina couldn't bear it all and she struck the ground.

"Ha!?"

Realizing she lost her consciousness, Nina jumped up.

"Oh, you sure are sturdy"

The voice came from a close source.

"And you realized it quite fast. As expected from Mrs platoon captain."

Her whole body still felt somewhat numb. This meant that her head was still experiencing vertigo.

"What was that technique just now?"

"My attempt at making the root of the old man's teaching. Not bad eh?"

"That's far from not bad...."

In that moment, the impact ran through her from her head to the tips of her toes and at the same time, her nerves were in a disorder, causing her whole body to feel so horrible that she shivered. That was, even if she was able to stop the blow, she couldn't have withstood it.

"I named it Raijin. It depends on the Kei density, but whether you're human or filth monster you can use it."

"Is it possible, for me to use it?"

The doubts Nina had not long ago, were now cleared from her mind. There was the fact he showed her such an amazing technique, but what gained her admiration was Dix's attitude of being so easily willing to teach her such a technique.[10]

"As long as you know how to control your Kei pulses, then doesn't the rest depend on your mental attitude? For any technique." [11]

"Thank you."

At hearing Dix's reply, Nina lowered her head.

"Regarding your request, it'd be easy to accomplish it if it's you but ..."

Nina and Dix, who stole out from the architectural department's practice area of the girl's dorm, were walking towards their destination.

"I want to meet Zuellni."

That was Dix's request.

Zuellni is the name of this city, but it isn't that only. It is also the name of the electronic spirit which bears the burden of the autonomy of the autonomous type moving city, regios.

What Dix wants, is to meet that electronic spirit.

"Well, why?"

While walking on the street at night, Nina inquired.

Those who want to meet the electronic spirit are restricted even if they are from the city. But there is no way this restriction has any special meaning. The place where the electronic spirit lives is in the heart of the city which is at the engine's central section. Those who go into the engine's section are only either the people who conduct the maintenance of the engine or people like Nina who undertake the job of cleaning it. Any other students are banned from entering if they are ill-prepared, but if you follow the legislative, then you can enter it as part of a field trip.

Entering the engine area in itself is not that hard of a thing to do . But whether you meet the electronic spirit or not depends on luck .

"Well, cause I'm going to graduate soon. It's something like making memories."

He laughed after saying that, but she didn't think that was his real intention.

The available time slots for the self-automated tramcar decrease as the night deepens, and the last train would be welcomed during the time day transits day. [12] It was not that late yet, but Dix still chose to walk unhurriedly.

"Senpai, why didn't you enter the platoons although you had the ability to?"

Currently, the name of Dixerio Maskane was not found within the 17 platoons. This was indubitably strange to Nina.

Zuellni is now in the power source of the engine, facing the urgent matter of whether the selenium is becoming exhausted or not. The only mine left will be lost if they were to be defeated in the upcoming military arts tournament. Even if that's not the case, the remaining selenium deposits and mines left adds to the worry. The mining had already stopped and the city's movement is restarting, but there is yet to be any official information from the student council regarding their prediction of the mine deposits left.

(It's so little to the point that they can't say it, huh)

This uneasiness had silently ran rampant among the students of the martial art.

That's how the situation is. Even if they performed a mass search for a capable student, it wasn't possible to stand up to the head of the military artist department.

She felt that Dix's capabilities had far surpassed those qualifications.

"Because I'm a guy who's bad with luck."

"But that's... ..."

"Look Nina. Before you get fixated with other people's problems, it's better to fixate yourself on your own problems first."

To the speechless Nina, Dix made an admonition.

"What does that mean?"

" ' If only I had him or her... ', isn't it unlike a military artist to engage in such meaningless talk[13] . Become stronger before talking about that, to be weak in itself is already a sin."

"... ... ..."

Nina hung her head in shame at the harsh words said in a nonchalant manner.

Even though she was like this, Dix continued talking.

"Although you may be a platoon captain, a person who looks out over all of her members cannot stand on the frontlines. There are times when the commander has to give out cruel decisions, but it's bad if you are pulled down by the feelings for your comrade in arms. Nina, which do you want to be?"

"I, want to protect Zuellni with these arms"

"If that's the case, then what you can only do is within the capacity of one military artist."

"But... ..."

As the captain of the 17th platoon, Nina has been planning a strategy for the interschool match. Although she acknowledges that her own strategy-drafting ability is still lacking, she also desires to hone that ability. And, for the sake of protecting Zuellni she wants to do it too.

"If you think platoon-scale tactics and intercity fights are the same, you're mistaken. Even though the fundamentals are the same, the burden suffered by each group is different."

"Is it really like that?"

"We were formerly talking about the type of military artist you wanted to be, right"

Nina became silent as they returned to the earlier question he posed.

As a military artist, it's true that you'd have the drive to enhance your own abilities. And when thinking about the strategies, you also can't lie about the uplifting feeling when you're struck by inspiration.

"... ...Was it about a commander's caliber?"

Softly, Dix murmured.

"Huh?"

"Er.....instead of that, even though a man and a woman are walking on a street at night, isn't it lonesome they can only talk on this kind of topic?"

"That's... ..."

"I'm not particularly saying that we should be making advances on each other though. Could it be you don't have anyone you like? "

"... ...No."

She planned to immediately assert herself, but he didn't take it that way.

"Oh, so there is."

"There's nobody at all."

She tried repeating it but it didn't seem he would believe her.

"Well, when it's about your year, I guess it can't be helped that you are that stubborn regarding love."

"So?... ..."

"But you know, when I was about your year there were enough relationships that were a step short from ripening. I don't know who your partner is, but guys like me who didn't even have time to twiddle our thumbs had our relationships taken away elsewhere. Hiding it might possibly be fun too. However, you better start thinking that you might not reach an understanding if you don't let your feelings surface. Otherwise, you might regret it."

The moment he said that, the figures of many ladies came to Nina's mind even when she didn't want it to. However, because the male at the center was Dix, the playing couldn't possibly get through to him. It wasn't because nobody decided to go for him, but it also wasn't possible that he was inclined towards anyone.

While he was somewhat composed, he was ascertaining his decided fate.

(Or is it... ...)

Was he thinking about a lady from his hometown, while not knowing her name?

"Trouble, trouble"

Dix laughed at the now silent Nina.

When 2 people arrived on the usual mechanism chamber entry Nina takes, there was an abnormal shadow.

But the person who realized wasn't Nina.

"Halt."

At the short words that expressed nervousness from Dix, Nina who was taken aback extended her arms for the sword belt.

This wasn't a place where people would gather at night. Rather than the presence of people, there was only a lone emergency lamp beside the street light at the entrance which emitted light.

But, there was a somewhat wrenching nervousness in this place.

Whatever caused it, Nina didn't know.

Beside Nina, Dix stood composed and stared at the front while having his guard up.

A heavy nervousness weighed above Nina's head.

"Yo, did you think I wouldn't realize with just that?"

"... ...Why are you here, wretch?"

As Dix called out into the darkness, a mechanic voice was returned.

"Although I didn't know that my fate would lead me to this town, but that's your miss."

In the next moment from the darkness of the no longer illuminating street light, the figure of a mechanic group wearing a beast's mask appeared.

"Hey, these people are....."

Because she had never seen the company, Nina extended her dite.

"Is she your aim? That's certainly interesting. But, that's exactly why I won't be beaten by you guys."

"That is the child we brought into this world. In the path before the phalanx, this pure child appeared as a blessing. I won't tell you not to interfere with the attempted theft"

"Eh?"

At the words from the beast faces, Nina looked at Dix.

"Yup. The person who plundered her is me. The person who broke, destroyed, trampled over, and stole your scheme is me. That's exactly why I won't allow you to recover her. This is the reasoning of a plunderer. And ... ..."

He didn't deny nor became perturbed by it but instead, he happily affirmed it with a laugh, while he extended his Dite.

"To use the excitement from the Heartseer and involve the students of my school... ...it's annoying. That is Zuellni's answer."

Restoration. Taking a stance with a Dite which transformed into a gigantic iron whip, Dix shouted.

"I thought you guys would come here again since you wanted to make bonds with Zuellni, but it won't go your way. That's my reason for coming here. You guys should just stay in Ignasis' flask. "

"Needless prattle"

Simultaneously after those words were said, the group moved to encircle Nina's party.

"Nina, guard the entrance. Don't let anyone pass."

"Ye-yes!"

Without understanding anything, Nina restored her Dite and moved towards the entrance. Each of the beast faces also took out their Dites. Even with the sudden presence of blood lust, Dix continued forward without hesitating.

"Well now, Dixerio Maskane of the city of desire will be your opponent."

While holding the gigantic iron whip with one hand, Dix beckoned.

"Wolf faces, 3 groups, here I come."

At the moment of those words, the wolf faces simultaneously sprang at Dix.

Dix raised his iron whip, allowing his kei to converge and then releasing it as he swung down the iron whip. The weight of the iron whip hit the shapeless atmosphere, creating mixed ripples of kei. The turbulent atmosphere became an invisible billow, pushing back the wolf faces who leapt at him.

"Get out from my sight, small fries.[14]"

Whether it was according to those words or not, a lone wolf face crouched down as if to fend off Dix's external burst kei and closed in on him.

In both his hands were katars, where in each Dite, if the handle is grasped a blade protrudes out before the fist transforming it into a thrusting weapon. The katar has numerous notches in the middle of the blade, which performs a trick that gouges and takes out flesh if one stabs and extracts it.

The lone wolf face that charged in as if he crawled on the ground brandished his katars as he aimed at Dix's abdomen.

Dix deflected the incoming katars with his iron whip.

As if they were intertwined, the katar-wielding wolf face engaged in close-quarter combat. Against the heavy weapon user Dix, the wolf face who has the advantage to make sharp turns ensured Dix kept his distance. Because the katars assaulted him alternated from the left and right, Dix was forced to continuously evade them.

At this rate, he doesn't have the leisure to use Raijin.

"Senpai!"

"Don't look away!"

Due to Nina's shout, Dix's movement faltered for a moment. The edge of the katar cut his cheek and blood spilled out from it.

But even after witnessing that, Nina couldn't move. The group of wolf faces that Dix initially blew away with his external kei now reorganized themselves and were closing in onto Nina.

"Go and occupy the Central Mechanism Chamber!"

Hearing the words of the katar-wielding wolf face, the group of wolf faces devotedly advanced.

To eliminate Nina who was on their route, each and every one of them threw their external kei towards her.

"Ku....."

Nina crossed her iron whips, driving kei throughout her entire body.

A variation of internal type kei, Kongoukei.

The defensive kei technique that Layfon taught her. It drives kei all over the surface of the body and uses this membrane to protect the entire body against the ballistic impact.

Using the rising fumes from the explosion, the wolf faces closed in to launch a surprise attack. The wolf faces never expected that a student military artist could be safe after receiving their concentrated gunfire. A wolf face tumbled to the ground after he was struck down by an iron whip that cut through the veil of smoke.

A mask came falling off among the mass of wolf faces who tumbled to the ground.

The dry sound of the mask hitting the ground pushed aside the noise from the battle and resounded from that location.

"Don't look!"

At that instant, Dix shouted. It was a warning directed towards Nina.

At what? She thought. The fallen mask was revolving while it glided across the ground. Was he talking about this? But I've already seen it.

Then what else?

For a moment, she forgot that she was in the midst of fighting. Realizing her mistake, Nina dispelled her fixated look and glanced up.

The fumes had already dispersed.

But, nobody moved. A wolf face who had a strange pattern faced this way, suspending any action.

It was as if he was suspended in a record photo.

"It's too late"

Somebody said that? Who was it?

"It's too late"

Again... ...

"It's too late" "It's too late" "It's too LaTe" "It'S ToO lATe"

The repeated words were coming from the wolf faces right in front of me. The repeating mechanic voice sounded like a broken playback machine.

My head is spinning. What is this scent caressing my nose... ...?

"It's Heartseer's powder. Do not be perplexed, open your eyes!"

Her eyes were opened. Without understanding what Dix meant, Nina stared at what was happening in front of her.

After receiving one hit from Nina, the wolf face who tumbled down had risen up. The battle garment was dirtied a rough yet fluffy white. There was only a black cloth left around the head of the fallen mask.

That face looked here. It was looking at Nina.

"Uu"

Nina saw, it.

There was nothing contained within the layer of black cloth that covered the head. There was only a black mist-like object which was congealing, in a thin yellow colour, three lights each the size of a baby's fist, that was arranged in the shape of an inverted triangle.

"What is ... ... that?"

A voice aimed at Nina covered her and murmured:

"You saw it" "You saw it" "yOu saw it" "yoU SaW iT" "You sAw It" "YoU saw it" "You saw IT" "You SAw it" "You already saw it"

A voice echoed, from within the dark cavity of the wolf face with the fallen mask.

"Ignasis' blessing, the distant eternity, comes not from lands across the Sanzou river, nor the underworld. We have become Avici, and stand at its gates. Who are you that advances against its phalanx?"

"Don't listen!"

Dix's shouting voice reaches her ears. However, Nina wasn't able to listen to it.

How profound those words were, and how much power they held, Nina couldn't understand any of it. It wasn't possible she would.

But, she saw the three shining objects inside the black cavity protrude out from the black cloth that formed the head, and subsequently become gigantic.

"The door has opened. Thou, be puzzled by the gorge of the aurora field."

But, this has to be some sort of deception. There were no changes even after those words. Rather than a black cavity, it should've concluded by returning to the original location of the fallen wolf face. Now, I don't even know if asking 'who' is enough.

It was supposed..... to be a deception.

Dix said it was the Heartseer's fine powder. If that's the case, is this the hallucinatory effect brought about by the fine powder?

"Damn.....Gaaaaaaa!"

Then why is Dix, screaming so frustratingly? Without understanding anything, Nina watched Dix's battle.

And certainly at that time, Dix's left shoulder was gouged by the katar. Even with the blood gushing out, he did not flinch and by thrusting away the wolf face fixated in front of him, he regained distance.

He lowered his waist. Nina was able to see the flow of kei for an instant. Raijin.

Occasionally, the city's sky is dyed a light purple and lightning is dispersed on the air filter's surface. Dix's figure disappears, the traces of him outlined by light. That form is evident because of the lightning; his figure is validated through its light and sometimes, this effect is already there.

When he showed it to Nina, he must have thoroughly held back .

Dix's iron whip smashed the wolf's face.

There should've been.....a lurid spectacle. However if it's with a safety device, it should possess that force no matter what you do. Otherwise, the striking weapon would be designed to beat to death. Stamping through the interference of the safety device, the wolf face was smashed.

It wouldn't have been strange if blood splashed and spinal fluid scattered and filled at that place.

But within the atmosphere that trembled from reverberations of the Raijin, the wolf face's battle garment was lightly pulled in, as if it coiled into a vortex towards the iron whip and consequently disappeared.

After that, what was left was only dispersed fragments of a broken mask.

Where did its contents, the body disappear to?

The spectacle of the black cavity hidden behind the interior of the mask flitted across Nina's mind.

The battle however was not finished yet.

"Don't lose focus!"

To be able to forget this fact, even if the situation is strange, it's probably because Nina's common sense is disconnected. The faceless mysterious assailant, the disappearing method, enigmatic words.....Nina could only think about shedding light on this abyss of disorder and chaos. The Heartseer's fine powder did not excite Nina but rather intoxicated her. In actuality, ever since Nina was overwhelmed by the strength of Raijin, she had been experiencing a vertigo-like sensation.

But regardless of how it is, that is Nina's negligence. There is no end to inexperience.

The beast faces who call themselves wolf faces, were not close to Nina yet. Their objective is the occupation of the Central

Mechanism Chamber. It doesn't seem like there are any changes to their plans, rather the wolf faces drew nearer towards Nina who is standing in front of the entrance to eliminate her.

Her negligence has crumbled her posture.

There isn't enough time. It's not enough to the point that it's already useless to restore her stance, much less to use Kongoukei, as the wolf faces advance closer.

At that time, what went through Nina's mind was ... ...

The sudden change appeared at that moment.

A light flashed through before her eyes. That light halted the wolf faces' pace.

That light took the form of a sword.

"Heaven's Blade... ..."

Who's words was it? Before her eyes was a shining reinforced silver blade.

There was a person who owned it.

Nina's eyes traced the arm wielding the silver blade to see it's owner.

(It can't be... ...)

"Layfon ... ...?"

Layfon was there. The Layfon that maintained the appearance of the cleaning committee member was grasping the silver blade, while gazing at the wolf faces with expressionless eyes.

"You came out from the door huh."

One of the wolf faces murmured.

Layfon readied himself with the silver blade in a formless manner and wielded the blade horizontally.

Heaven's Blade Art, Hazy Garret.

What happened, when he swung it... ... Nina could only see the sword being swung horizontally.

But, with one action everything was settled.

A great number of the wolf faces were simultaneously slain. Vertically, horizontally, diagonally, the bodies that had been instantaneously minced slipped away in parallel to the decapitation lines. Just like it was with Dix, the contents disappeared with the battle garments coiling in a vortex and were sucked inside of the decapitation lines.

"Then for now, I have finished with this."

Leaving those words, the mass of wolf faces disappeared without a trace.

Nina was in blank amazement, as she stared at Layfon's back.

"Oi"

Dix went and grasped that shoulder.

"Let's go now that we have the chance"

"What do you mean by let's go.....eh?"

Even now, there were no signs of the blood flow stopping as it still flowed out from Dix's left shoulder. It was due to the flesh gouged out from the katar.

A scowl did appear on Dix's face in response to the pain but he didn't bother anymore than that.

"But, um ... ..."

Dix's purpose here, at the Central Mechanism Chamber, was to meet Zuellni. That she could remember.

However ... ...

"Just ignore him for now."

"But to just ignore him... ..."

"Don't restrain yourself. If you don't get back home, you might get involved."

Without understanding the meaning of those words, Nina half-heartedly passed through the entrance to the Central Mechanism Chamber.

While closing the door to the Central Mechanism Chamber, an elevator was descending downwards.

Layfon came wearing clothes of the cleaning commitee. At this hour, he would have already entered into the Central Mechanism Chamber and started cleaning.

(How did Layfon appear at that place?)

While waiting for the elevator, Dix performed a simple haemostasis. He ripped off his uniform sleeve, and tied it tightly around the wound opening. Even so, the part gouged out by the sawtooth-shaped[15] knife still continued bleeding and in a blink of an eye, dyed the cloth in a deep red.

Go to the hospital, or so she thought but upon seeing the composed look on his face, Nina decided to keep quiet.

The elevator finally arrived.

"I might have done something bad to you."

Dix murmured in the middle of boarding the elevator.

"Will, something happen?"

"... ... You should know that, the air filter protecting the cities around the world is not something natural, right?"

Dix did not have the aloof expression that he wore earlier. Maybe because he was drained of blood, a shadow of severe fatigue showed on his face.

"Yes."

"Similarly, you should also know about talks regarding the point that loitering filth monsters in our current world couldn't possibly be natural. If so, then who, why, ... would there be electronic spirits, would there be alchemists before such a question is asked. You are influenced by the electronic spirits. Even if you say no, it is forced onto you such that you are unable to live like the others."

"This is sort of the fate of those who see an electronic spirit for the first time. If I were to give you a suggestion, reciting Ignasis' name pretty much doesn't give him any satisfaction. Be careful about it."

"Ignasis... ... is it a person's name?"

"You'll eventually meet him."

Dix laughed while unreasonably raising the tip of his lips. Because that was indefinitely a complex sentiment to conceive, Nina could only remain reticent.

"... ... But, I'd never thought that he would be so suddenly summoned."

"Eh?"

"That man, it's him right. The one that you're interested in."

At that moment, Nina's face flushed a bright red.

"That's, you're mistaken. No, you're not mistaken but... ...since he's my junior! I am only interested in him since he's my junior."

"Well, let's just go with that then."

"Like I said... ..."

"... ... Beware of him"

Suddenly lowering his voice, Nina caught on to the words.

"He was born as an exceptional person, right?"

With only that one moment, Dix had seen through something about Layfon.

"There are many fellows who are born strong, who don't know how to correctly use their abilities. You better be careful."

"... ... Yes"

"If you do something like that, you'd also get a lot of points."

The elevator had finally arrived at its destination. Dix said that as he struck Nina's head in a caressing manner, and then came out of the elevator alone. As Nina chased after him in objection, Dix turned his body around to prevent her from doing so.

Dix's hand nimbly pressed the switch, causing the iron-railing shaped door to close.

"Eh, um... ..."

"About Raijin... ... you've already seen it. I've also said that I would teach you. Whatever shape it takes, you can definitely become accustomed to it. Doing so will allow the phenomenon to occur. Figure out the rest yourself. Whether it's one-handed or two-handed, the method of usage differs."

"Senpai... ..."

This evening was filled with mysteries. The competent yet non-platoon member Dix. The sudden display of an amazing technique. The mysterious assailant. Ignasis... ...

"The long time taken to walk to Zuellni was fun."

The elevator shook. It was beginning to ascend.

"If possible, I pray that we won't meet twice. But if we do, will you allow me to play as your senior again?"

"Senpai!"

"Because today was like a festival. I'll get through to your place with a similar plan in mind, definitely."

In response to Nina's cry, Dix who was across the elevator waved his hand then turned around.

Returning to the entrance, Layfon was standing there overcomed with surprise.

"Ah? Captain?"

The puzzled Layfon slanted his head when Nina appeared.

"Ah? There's no work today right? Eh? Wait a minute, why am I here again?"

There was no silver blade in his hands.

"Layfon ... ... you?"

Just as she said it, she held her tongue. She didn't know why, but it was better to not talk about everything that happened just now. That's what she felt.

If you don't get back home, you might get involved... ...those words shut her mouth.

"Maybe I was half-asleep?"

"Maybe it's just that? You're probably just tired. You had work as the municipal police in the afternoon, right?"

"That's, that's true but, yeah... ..."

Appropriately showing the same opinion to Layfon who twisted his neck was, as if urging him to return to the Central Mechanism Chamber.

"Oh, yeah."

Layfon hit his hand while standing inside the elevator, prompting Nina to come over.

"What?"

"I just remembered Captain using a difficult-looking technique. Show it to me tomorrow at the military arts training hall, OK? The technique you called Raijin."

Nina was taken aback by those words.

So this is how the plan will get through to me.

(I see, so this is what he was talking about)

How Layfon knew about Raijin, it's as if Dix knew about this too. Without thinking both of them were strange, Nina just accepted all of it.

(Instead of sweets, a technique... ...huh. If I were to say it fits me, that would certainly be true.)

It's a gift that's far from having a feminine touch.

"Look forward to it."

Accepting it with that air, he laughed.

Due to Nina's words, Layfon laughed. Hearing a laugh different from Dix's, Nina was so influenced by it that she smiled from happiness [16].

At that time... ... when Dix was preoccupied with mass of wolf faces that launched an ambush towards her, what went through Nina's mind was Layfon's face. Whether something occurred during that moment... ... it's like the Heartseer's fine powder showed her a dream.

(The ultimate good luck is to conform with my partner)

The words of that line just came across her thoughts.

(I'm over-thinking it)

That's what she thought, but that thought wasn't particularly evoked by any feelings of disgust.

There's none, but he did appear just in the nick of time and saved her... ... just like she was some heroine from a fairy tale. Occasionally, a heroine's fate has a direct connection to the hero's fate. That probably doesn't have the same meaning as what Selina had said though.

It's just her opinion that she did not suit such a role made her felt ashamed.

It's embarrassing but... ...

"That's an unnecessary debt, you damned senior."

And while she said that, she couldn't return her smiling face to its original form.

What Nina will know regarding the old fact that Dixerio Maskane enrolled into Zuellni ten-odd years ago, and more importantly the fact that he was the perpetrator who rewrote the letters carved onto the pedestal of the statue at the interior of the student council building is something that will happen several days later .

Ignasis, and the strange group that refer to themselves as wolf faces.....that instead of appearing once in front of Nina, she will meet that figure daily.

At times, she will suddenly remember about that night and pose questions about it. She had a feeling something was about to occur, but just like the quiet flow of water at the bottom of a lake, Nina was unable to feel it.

The time those words will once again reach her ears, is right after the match with the 1st platoon has ended.

Sweet Day - Sweet Midnight

She decided to give up.

Never before had she been this humiliated. She had not thought that she was this incompetent.

Time to stop. Who knew how things would turn out.

She thought this.

Obviously she should think this way.

(I, what am I doing?)

The kitchen. The stove. The pot of boiling water. The bowl filled with grated chocolate.

Her forehead oozed sweat.

She stood in the kitchen. She was wearing an apron. In front of her were many ingredients.

Felli, at a loss, asked herself what exactly she was doing.

She was thinking of making sweets. However many times she pondered, this was definitely the conclusion.

Why.....

She was so helpless, why had she wanted to challenge that, how unthinkable.

She had run around for the sake of giving sweets, but the outcome became this embarrassment.

Despite this, why had she wanted to use the remaining ingredients in the kitchen to do this kind of thing.

Annoying. Very annoying. So today when she returned, she had buried herself in her room under the covers. Regardless of what happened she would not leave.

Perhaps, there would be problems if she slept early. Right now she didn't know if something was on fire or if there was other trouble, but she slept.

It was definitely because right now she was under a lot of pressure, so she chose to hide.

When she woke, it was late at night.

She had not slept until morning, but even if she wanted to return to her deep sleep she was unable to fall asleep.

.....Thinking back, she didn't know how things had turned into this.

It was nothing but a cookbook bought to pass the time. The previous few days, she had bought the book to make preparations, then idled, and now she was looking back on things.

She didn't know why she had thought of making sweets.

(Cookbooks..... how terrifying)

She was sweating profusely because the stove's temperature was too high, and shuddered in fear because of how the cookbook had tricked her.

Felli stopped in front of the steam, grabbing the bowl. She repeatedly grabbed and then let go.

Should she do this or not.

During her hesitation, Felli returned to normal.

Right now she could still go back. She had gone through many hardships just like this day's, turning the calendar page after page.

But, did she still have the energy?

(Eh.....)

Her hands grabbing the bowl became still. The water boiled with a gurgle.

Sweets. She didn't know how to make sweets, but Felli had her area of expertise.

Psychokinesis.

She was a Psychokinesist.

Zuellni's sole unequaled Psychokinesist was Felli Loss.

However, the Psychokinesist who was Felli had some doubts about herself.

(Eh.....)

Fear of failure.

Especially if one has already failed before, she will experience fear encompassing her entire body.

The hands that held the bowl moved. Felli released her hands, and moved away. But, if she stopped here, wouldn't that just be breaking her style?

(Hmph!)

Felli took the bowl again.

Recovering his body upon waking up, Karian clear-headedly opened his eyes, seeing the numerous sweets heaped on the table, and his exhausted sister who was soundly sleeping on the sofa.

To Conquer the Phalanx

The sun had set in the west, and the moon had no clouds, with no light in the sky other than the air filter.

That was the air filter spaced at equal distances along the outer edge. The shaking towers situated outside that were almost falling down were there to block the city's invisible enemy - pollutants. They generated a special airflow, isolated from the outside.

On the tower was a shadow. Every tower had a shadow. But the shadow's darkness was swallowed up in the dark haze of the cloudy day, and no one would give it a second glance. This shadow took the form of an opening on the top of the tower, as if it were an orifice of the air filter, spraying something outside, almost unnoticeably.

The small tyrant dominated the sofa.

"Wu-"

A moan.

"Wait."

From the kitchen came Gorneo's voice.

In his hand was a saucepan that was being heated, and the smell of meat being scorched mixed together with the burning smell of spices. Inhaled into the nose, it stimulated the stomach.

"Wu-"

The flavor was very strong, and he groaned with suffering. Gorneo moaned again, and scorched a big piece of meat.

They were very hungry, and quite excited. Usually, they would go to a nearby twenty-four hour restaurant for dinner, but for today, the restaurants were almost all closed, and the only open one was celebrating the anniversary of its opening, and was endlessly busy. Bringing a starving Shante to that kind of place was no good..... Even if he had no choice, this smell that was produced even made Gorneo unable to stand it.

The battle with the Academy City Myath had finished recently. He was very tired. But this was also a reason for excitement. Because they had let Nina go on ahead, Gorneo and Shante, along with ten other Military Artists, had acted together. The aftertaste of the battle still lingered.

Behind him came threatening moans. Gorneo already had no responses, silently watching the roasting meat.

Other than roasting meat there was only instant soup. The refrigerator did not have any fresh vegetables. Even if there were, he didn't have the strength to make salad. There was only the corn and potatoes being cooked along with the meat.

He scooped the meat onto plates, spread some butter on it, and considered it done.

Two people silently ate it all. Gorneo used his knife to cut the hot meat into big pieces, putting them in his mouth. Shante used a fork to pierce it and bring it to her mouth to slowly chew. They were not used to this kind of atmosphere at dinner, so there was that kind of reaction.

It was just eating.

After a while they had eaten everything.

Drinking a cup of juice in a gulp, he finally felt refreshed. Drooping his shoulders, he didn't feel like moving at all.

But, the plates were still left there. In his heart he thought he could wait a while before collecting them, but he thought that would be the start to an abhorrent character.

"Hey, we're washing the dishes."

"Nya-"

Shante was already curled up on the sofa. If she had a tail, it would definitely be wagging in satisfaction. Gorneo thought she hadn't heard, and let out a sigh.

"At least speak human language."

After saying that, Gorneo brought the dirty dishes back to the kitchen to wash. When he returned, Shante was sleeping. He would have to bother to carry her to the room nearby.

Sometimes, Shante would enter Gorneo's room like this, and after falling asleep would be carried back, but recently he had thought that his roommate had been looking at his eyes strangely. Since Van Allen's day.

"It really is....."

He did not have such plans. But, without a doubt it was not that he had no interest in guy-girl affairs. He would admit that he was old-fashioned, but didn't feel that it was embarrassing. He knew that among the Military Artists, there were those who had received genes for interacting with girls. Even if others did not agree with his methods, he was reluctant to be a Military Artist who criticized the rest of society.

He didn't want to be considered such a person.

He and Shante were not really lovers. So that kind of thing would never happen, those girls' suspicions were incorrect..... purposefully explaining was also strange, sure enough all Gorneo could do was silently worry.

(Might as well sleep)

He had no reason not to, so he really went to sleep, and hence Gorneo returned to his room.

He didn't fall asleep.

(.....What is it?)

Shante kept silent while making no noise, holding an intimidated look. With a serious expression, she keenly watched the balcony.

What was it. Gorneo turned his sight to the side, as a voice sounded.

"You're keeping something interesting."

"Intruder" was the word that went through his mind, and Gorneo gracefully assumed a stance. It was using Sakkei. But, if it had gotten so close without him noticing.....

But, the next moment, Gorneo was surprised again.

"Is it a wild beast? I never thought I would get noticed without making noise. Ah, it was worth it."

That voice. Although he saw that figure standing in front of the balcony window, Gorneo didn't dare believe his eyes, this absolutely couldn't be.

This place, it ought to be Zuellni.

But he was a Heaven's Blade Successor, and was one of Grendan's protectors, the Luckens' legitimate heir. He couldn't think of why he would leave Grendan.

"How did you know? Smell? If that's the case, then using Sakkei against filth monsters would be almost useless. Revering the downwind would be only proper."

But the way he leisurely examined Shante, and the accent with which he spoke, was indeed him.

"Brother."

Savaris Qualafin Luckens.

"Yo! Goru. It's been a while. How many years? You grew big, huh."

Saying this, Savaris stood in front of Gorneo, patting his arm.

"Brother, why have you come here?"

"Ah? I wanted to fight with Layfon."

Before Gorneo even had time to be surprised, Savaris laughed so much that he shook.

"Hahaha. Just kidding, just kidding. Well, that kind of thing would be very interesting, it would be well worth the wait."

"......Could it be, you have business with the Mercenary Gang?"

"Well, that kind of thing. Right, why don't you introduce me to this child so I can meet her?"

Savaris' sight turned to Shante who had not relaxed her look.

"Since she saw through my Sakkei, she must be remarkable."

"Huh!!"

With no regard for how pleased Savarais seemed, Shante still didn't change her intimidated look.

"Shante, don't do that."

Seeing Shante about to pounce, Gorneo stopped her. She agilely climbed up Gorneo's back, and made an escape.

"How meaningful."

"She's a problem child."

Gorneo explained the situation of Shante's upbringing.

Hearing those words, Savaris was driven by curiosity.

"Ah! As expected, you can't underestimate the growing up environment! In Grendan strong people are gathered, at the same time, one should take advantage of that place where specially trained monsters are drilled."

He spoke endlessly.

He hadn't changed.

This person hadn't changed at all.

Five years had passed since he left Grendan, but he was still the same.

His outer appearance and his personality all had not changed.

Strong internal Kei that could suppress aging was a known neighbor in Grendan. Trained Military Artists could look younger than their actual age. For example, the Heaven's Blade Successor Tigris ought to be eighty years old, but his exterior did not seem that way at all.

Savaris had also maintained the condition of his body over that period.

"Since I managed to come here, I want to see your abilities. Let me experience them."

"Well....."

He had witnessed the fight with the Academy City Myath. Gorneo sucked in a breath. If it were only being seen by his brother , Gorneo didn't feel any pressure.

"Seems like you grew up. Although you still aren't very mature. "

"T, thanks for the praise."

He hasn't thought that he would be praised, so he was surprised.

"You still haven't reached Gahard's level."

But, attaching this sentence, as expected of his brother.

"Well, I guess you haven't. You never had that kind of strong healthy growth."

"Brother, Gahard....."

He had never thought that the impression Savaris had of Gahard was like that, rather, the shock at meeting his admired brother was all gone.

He had once heard of this.

Gahard Baren was Gorneo's brother, and had been beaten black and blue by Layfon, but what had happened to him afterwards.

Savaris should know.

"Ah, then....."

For a moment, there was no noise.

At that time, the light decorating Zuellni was extinguished completely.

The sound also disappeared.

The surroundings quieted down, that would mean that the movements of the city that its residents did not feel had stopped.

The steps of the city had stopped. In order to exterminate invading filth monsters, the city had stopped its movement.

Normally, that would mean the city's death.

But, right now that was not the case.

Because everyone's lights had gone out, the city's night view was made clear.

Seven-colored light was fixed in the night sky, full of fantasy, but also vivid like a real scene, changing the city.

Filth monsters swept over the ground, the city that housed people was being invaded, and Military Artists resisted. That kind of world drew clear boundaries.

But at that time, the people living there could not understand the different situation or the city's changed appearance.

The light source illuminating the city. Past the air filter, the reflecting seven-colored light diffused outward and encroached upwards, drooping downward and flickering.

The aurora had appeared there.

"Shine light upon the future."

The masked man softly said this.

The masked man stood on the roof of an engine of the air filter, muttering.

Wearing a beast mask, even though he was like the other people wearing peculiar clothes and standing on the engine, he was nonetheless distinctive. Wearing a cloak over himself, hand holding a restored Dite, which was a decorative, cumbersome staff that no one would think to use on a battlefield.

On the head of the staff was a large cross, and to protect it, a loop was twisted around it. The ring was covered in uncountable small rings colliding with each other, giving off a biting cold sound in the night air, and simultaneously throwing off sparks.

"Eyes, guard this night's peacefully sleeping thorns. Carve the tombstone inscription of this cross. Arise! Cast light upon the future!"

Shaa (sfx).

A sound drifted.

As he spoke those words, the small rings resounded in the air.

"Eyes, eyes that peer into the forbidden space, arise!"

Shaa

Shaa

Shaa

Shaa

Shaa

Shaa

The sound drifted.

"Cast light onto the future."

The seven-colored light radiated towards Zuellni, and the noise of the colliding small rings spread outwards.

Shaa.

The noise of the staff disappeared, quietly visited by silence.

"As expected, it's only a shadow."

The Wolf Face muttered in a low voice.

The Wolf Faces already knew about the events that happened in Myath.

The connection to Rigzario had failed.

At that time, Dixerio Maskane had brought in a new Military Artist, and a Heaven's Blade Successor from Grendan had also come.

And also, the maiden who was soundly sleeping in the dorm.

But, however you called it, the thorns that guarded her sleep had not appeared.

"If it's a shadow, it couldn't have thorns."

The voice did not contain disappointment.

Their purpose was also to come here to confirm.

"But, to pay respects to them, we lost a lot of precious powder."

Thinking of this made him feel bad. In the world that this city held power over, there were many types of restrictions that stopped the Wolf Face's original Aurora Field world from appearing again. Among them was the power of the powder that had been scattered into the air filter.

"We can't waste it."

Shaa.

The staff resounded again.

"Now, let us return to collect the fragments of dreams from sleep. Since Grendan has begun to move, we cannot ignore it."

Shaa.

"First draw forth his instinct, expose his real body, break his container, and remove the seal on the fragment of dreams."

Shaa.

"Up."

"Saying this, the other Wolf Faces on the engine disappeared without a trace.

"......With this, about an eighth."

The Wolf Face using the staff watched his companions disappear in the city's night, and whispered.

"Those related Heaven's Blade Successors cannot be an obstruction. They are the only ones who could be trouble..... with their character, they will inevitably return."

Even if they engulfed the fragment of the dream, there was a minimum number of Military Artists. If they could do that, I would once again receive my budget.....

"It could also be thought of as the blessing of thorns. I should not hastily take things for myself."

He had already failed once. In order to keep from repeating that , this time he should not let his heart be distracted. If people obstructed him, even if they couldn't defeat him they could struggle for time.

"We have not reached Lævateinn. First, we should decide how to seize the fragment of the dream."

Right, first was.....

However, Grendan would eventually reach Lævateinn. Even if it were a reflection, the thing that was sleeping would also emerge eventually. In other words, the thing moving under the surface had begun to come up.

That Wolf Face did not know what had happened. Discarding fame, accepting constraints, accepting evaluations of ability, the position of the commander in this world of cities. Grendan had come across Lævateinn, but still did not know what had happened .

Or, perhaps no one understood.

The Wolf Faces did not understand, and the people of Grendan did not understand.

If that were the case, then in this world of cities, in this era, it was impossible to measure to what extent its influence would spread.

The world of the Wolf Faces was the same.

The place that brought the aurora was also the same.

But, then they're the same as us.

Grendan seemed like it was planning something, and we were also restless. Of Rigzario's connected machines, there was still one left that had totally destroyed the sleep of the dream fragment.

Then, before that.....

This battlefield was like shogi[17]. Regardless of how you were broken, it was still a loss, and the only option was to win before the opponent.

These matters that were considered afterwards were completely unnecessary.

Shaa.

Even though there were no people, there were still the small rings.

The aurora enveloping Zuellni swayed. For various reasons, the light waves shook.

It was like ripples.

"He's arrived."

How were these chess pieces placed?

To penetrate the space of my pieces, it could only be a strong offensive directed at me.

The opponent was only a piece.

I had placed numerous pieces.

But, it wasn't playing the same game, that piece that had not been placed according to the guidelines didn't follow the rules.

How long had it been since he arrived here?

Thinking about it, he couldn't help but feel stupid. It definitely wasn't today or yesterday, but it also wasn't more than two years ago. At most half a year. He didn't have much of a sense of time, so maybe it hadn't even been half a year.

Though, how was this seven-colored scene here?

"How uncomfortable."

The male..... Dixerio Maskane..... Dix whispered. He had returned to his homeland, and though he had been displaced six years from this city, to him it felt like yesterday. He had become

accustomed to battling in the City of Strong Desire Velzenheim, but was tired of acting as someone who had been born and raised in the city.

That was this man.

"It really is..... What has happened?"

Dix walked on the empty streets of Zuellni, muttering.

He knew what he had to do.

Nina who had reached Myath also knew. Opposing the Aurora Field, passing through the En system, Dixerio knew the intentions of the Wolf Faces.

The Haikizoku had seized Nina's body.

But, that was only hearsay. He hadn't been fully informed.

Even if he knew the plot of the Wolf Faces, he didn't know their methods, or the kinds of consequences that their objective could bring.

If he wanted to know, he would have to get even more involved with them.

That would mean the danger of being assimilated into them.

Dixerio walked, shoulders trembling slightly. Thinking of the day the City of Strong Desire had been destroyed, that day Dixerio had been steadily living his life, and the events that happened later .

"I don't want to think about that again."

Stroking his trembling shoulders, Dix quickened his pace. He knew Nina's residence. It was the Architecture Department's anniversary commemoration building. His memory of the Architecture student who had constructed it was still fresh. Indeed , he had lived there for three years. Withdrawn and eccentric, not paying any attention to his clothes, not caring if he went several days without bathing or changing clothes, but unable to tolerate a single speck of dust in the room. However, he could build all styles of structures. He could also make alterations. If Dix asked him to alter his room, regardless of how ancient, he was able to decorate and transform it into a style befitting Dix.

"How is it? Don't you feel it's suitable for a senior?"

Though he didn't know where it had come from, he stood on an animal fur rug, and confidently asked this of Dix.

"Aah, it's great."

Dix replied.

How many years had passed since that?

Thinking of his sparkling expression as he spoke about the decorations of the room, Dix unknowingly began running.

The watch on the chain around his neck made a ticking noise. Even though it looked ancient, it still had lots of function. When Dix had been a student, he once had no choice but to leave the city to eliminate filth monsters. No one had been able to send Psychokinetic flakes to there, and Dix could do nothing but stand there. An alchemy student had asked, "you're going to eliminate filth monsters?", and given Dix the watch. It had a function to determine position using magnets, and a long-distance communication function..... When Dix had to rely on his own strength to return to Zuellni, she had thought of a way to help him, and added necessary functions to the watch.

By now, other than the timekeeping function, all the others no longer worked, but even so, Dix couldn't bear to get rid of it.

"You definitely have to return."

Only she had sent him heartfelt wishes.

It was this watch and that remark which had given the exhausted Dix the strength to return to Zuellni. When he thought of her, the running Dix restored the Dite in his hand.

A large iron whip.

With his brain filled with fighting filth monsters, relying on that big striking weapon, Dix had made it to this day.

Anger simmered in him.

The house had been destroyed, fury.

That guy who had boasted about how he transformed the house , the girl who had given him the watch, and the sweetheart, friends , and rivals that lived in his memories, the ones who let them become memories were these assholes destroying Zuellni.

(Flog, ruin, smash)

The so-called striking weapon, that so-called weight in his right hand, was born all for this.

In order to strike, rout, and crush the obstacles blocking the road ahead, Dix had chosen the whip.

Therefore.....

In front of the sprinting Dix, numerous people blocked the road.

"You assholes, I'll give you another death."

Dix shouted while releasing Kei.

His body was already full of enough Kei.

Combined Internal and External Kei variant, Raijin.

Just this one strike thoroughly defeated all of the people blocking the road.

Purple lightning flashed, some blue Kei light mixed in with it, but no one paid attention to this point.

However, that blue Kei had not been used against the Wolf Faces.

"Ah....."

The one lucky person had only been grazed by Dix's Raijin painfully shouted, rolling on the ground.

Something like black spots floated on his chest from his clothing . They slowly diffused outwards.

It looked quite like the erosion from pollutants.

The other Wolf Faces had already perished.

The others were an avatar, and the real thing was just now painfully struggling.

"This can't be, why..... why!"

Because of the pain and suffering, from the inside of the mask came the sound of vague lamentations. This man was already not thought of as one of the Wolf Faces. He had only been a pitiful piece abandoned here to block Dix's offensive.

Afterwards, Dix did not pay attention to the man's ending, continuing forward.

Until arriving in front of the dorm, he was unimpeded.

Dix stopped his steps.

There were no human figures in front of the dorm.

However, there was a killing intent directed at Dix.

"Che."

Licking his lips, he confirmed the situation of his surroundings.

Other than the commemorative dorm, the surrounding buildings were either being constructed or in the middle of demolition.

On an uncovered steel beam, on a roof without tiling, behind a collapsed wall, hid countless Wolf Faces.

Dix's unique skill Raijin was only a straight line attack. So they planned not to face him, but surprise attack him simultaneously from many corners.

Considering the ability of the Wolf Faces, regardless of whom, they would pose no threat to Dix.

But, even so, if they attacked collectively, even if he didn't lose he would suffer setbacks.

Time dragged on.

Changing words, these guys' purpose was right here.

(Simply a big open killing field, huh.....?)

Considering it was so annoying. Dix extended his empty left hand to his chin.

But, he stopped halfway.

He had not considered whether their plans were to stall him. In that case, he had a restriction, he had to conserve his power or else he wouldn't be able to use it for the critical juncture.

Or it could be that the intelligence about them trying to capture the Haikizoku inside Nina was a trap all along, and their true target was Dix.

Or perhaps both of them were targets, and either was fine.

(Can I part like this?)

(Have they set up a trap for us?)

On battlefields with the Wolf Faces, there were always performances involving mutual probing and entanglements of the mind. He had resolved to not rely on that kind of thing, but only on strength. But, regardless of his resolve, the ranks of those guys endlessly grew.

That was the counter ability of the Wolf Faces.

Quantity.

Overwhelming numbers.

Perhaps, that was their greatest strength, numbers.

Their spying acted as an individual and growing limit, though they could break through it, depending on the individual it would simply make a new limit threshold, and they could only collectively chase power. Even if they tired of the promised rebirth they were individually children, and could only become strong collectively.

It wasn't a moving or tragic realization.

They could not shake from the deaths of their companions.

They could not project their companion's death onto their self, and did not hesitate forward.

(Really, their greatest strength.)

However, Dix was able to defeat that kind of strength.

Just like the men he had just killed, Dix had methods for coping with them.

"Have you finished preparing? Today I won't show you any mercy."

Dix sent words towards the Wolf Faces that were just about to attack.

He was slightly..... indecisive.

Dix could destroy the greatest fantasy that the Wolf Faces held in their heart.

If things progressed as they were, Nina would also become that way.

Was the target of the Wolf Faces to guard against that?

The significance of such prevention was the same for Dix.

(I can't let that guy be on an equal footing with me)

Dix didn't know when the Haikizoku had gotten tangled up with that member of the younger generation.

That poor youngster only planned to provide information, but had rolled into this side of the world. The Haikizoku was utilizing her to become the same as himself, which to Dix was an unforgiveable defeat.

He had to prevent it.

"If you won't come, I'll go."

He wouldn't agree to a stalemate. Dix began taking strides forward.

He treaded forth.

Movement.

External Kei surged up from Dix's whole body.

The iron whips danced acrobatically, creating wind. Creating strong wind. Wild.

The Wolf Faces that were charging closer to Dix were blown flying.

It wasn't over.

"Sorry, I remembered you were an idiot."

The iron whip pointing down lashed the surface of the road. In order to return to its original position and reach. It left deep linear gashes.

The iron whip was draped over his shoulder.

His brain was filled with thoughts of the movements in his Kei vein. The up and down movements of Kei scattered heat around his spine by his waist.

Surges of Kei energy.

Saved up energy.

The Wolf Faces who had been knocked flying climbed back up, and approached Dix again. The serrated blades held in their hands blocked the light of Kei and the radiance of its sparks, like piranhas moving back and forth in the dark night.

Towards their prey, like hungry wolves attacking a tiger.

"How uninteresting."

The blades approached.

But whether they touched the jacket that wrapped his body.....

That moment, he erupted.

Raijin.

Release.

The wild roar of the purple lightning chased after the released light along the road in front of the dorm. The Wolf Faces in front of Dix could not endure the strike, and were eliminated.

But, they had not given up.

After finishing his release, Dix stopped his steps, immediately turned, and released again.

Raijin.

Because of the effect of that trick, the Wolf Faces' formation was in chaos. They bore the full power of the blow, and were destroyed . Some people had managed to jump out of the way, and were spared.

But it was not over yet.

Raijin.

This time, he faced upwards. Of the people who had leaped upwards to escape, half were destroyed.

During the momentum of the move and on a steel fixture exposed by a building in the middle of demolition, he released once more.

Raijin.

Correct, it was a strike dropping from the sky.

The road was shattered apart, and Dix walked out from the aftermath.

Fragments of the Wolf Faces' clothing drifted down from above his head.

There were already no Wolf Face figures in the surroundings. Because after four Raijins, they were all ashes.

"Che, though I didn't spend much time, I'm pretty tired."

After complaining, Dix ran towards the dorm.

Wolf Faces had also gathered in the dorm.

As soon as Dix noticed them, he charged in. The movements of the guys blocking him revealed the location of Nina's room. Dix expended all his power, persisting till the end, and arrived at that room.

Once there, Dix saw it.

"So-called Military Artists, but originally just an imitation of one person's abilities, and Electronic Fairies can only exist in one person's body at a time, a partner that cannot be left aside. Military Artists are the numerous incomplete shadows left behind by one person, Electronic Fairies are inferior copies of prototypes. But, the related matters will not disappear. Electronic Fairies' sufferings are Military Artists' sufferings, the Haikizoku's anger is also the anger of Military Artists. Spellbound by Rigzario, we are the shadow of a world left behind, and under its unending pull we wage war with filth monsters."

He heard someone's voice.

It felt like Nina was in her own dream.

A pitch-black dream.

In the dream, a voice she had never heard before was hovering by her ear.

Who was it?

The voice disappeared. This was a dream, one that was different from the dreams she pictured.

What was different from right now?

"We are shadows."

The voice continued.

"We are shadows born and hidden in this world. Long, long shadows cast by the sunset. We were tossed in a faraway place by our host, and have imitated their appearance."

Have you not thought of the fate of getting away?

When you initially encountered filth monsters, weren't you afraid?

Those Military Artists who braved danger, faced with only envy , who for compensation are imposed upon by normal people living normal lives, have you never felt anger?

Why could they only live in this kind of dangerous place, has no one ever thought that?

The voice that asked this continued.

"Why do you endlessly fight?"

(I.....)

That time, in Nina's heart, memories floated up like bubbles.

The time when she lived in the Senou City Schneibel.

It was when she was small.

It was when she had just begun her training as a Military Artist.

A memory of Nina Antalk when she was ten years old.

Senou City Schneibel. Nina's hometown. The city' with the Rigzario machine which manufactured Electronic Fairies.

As small as birds, just-formed Electronic Fairies floated in the air of the city. Once it reached night, they would sparkle brilliantly like stars, decorating the city's sky.

That was Schneibel.

But if it were during the day, that fantasy scene could not be seen.

"Ah....."

Dust blew around in the blue sky, spreading out slowly. But the winds were strong, coolly blowing past her ears. Since they were protected by the air filters, the strong wind that they did not received rushed straight through, and conversely her whole body was warmly bathed in the sunlight.

The huge multi-legs were moving beside her. Therefore sometimes she saw their shadows, and at those times she would feel pleasantly cool. It wasn't cold. It was thankfully cool.

Because her body was very hot.

"Ah....."

Her hoarse voice resounded in the air. From that low voice, she felt like something had happened. She was surprised at how calm she herself was.

That place was the city's outskirts, above the pipes that were spread across the city's outer walls. Above her head extended the back of the outer portion, to her right was the city's outer wall, and to her left was the city's moving legs. There was a small gap between the outer wall and the water pipes, and if her body moved a little, she would fall to the ground. It was more of a reason to wait there for her fate.

The nearby exhaust pipes gave off a sharp noise. The stampeding sound of the city made the sound of the world even noisier.

That startup noise of the machine shook her body. It was possible that the vibration might make Nina fall to the ground.

Then, she should escape. Though she was a child of ten years, she was a Military Artist. Using her own body's ability, and using the protuberances and scaffolding around, she might be able to return to the outer edge. Even if the Military Artist children all gathered here, it would only be one of their games to test their courage.

But, the current Nina still couldn't do it.

The reason why was because Nina's feet and hands were fractured.

".....What should I do."

At a loss, she looked at the sky, asking herself this.

She had already lost the pain of the fractures, only feeling as if her four limbs were boiling. But, that paralysis was the reason why she could not move, since if she moved, severe pain would take that opportunity to strike. Her hands and feet were fractured, and she even had no way to properly stand up.

".....What should I do."

She whispered again with a small voice. She thought of calling for help but because of the pain she couldn't yell loudly. Even if she could, there weren't necessarily people to listen.

At that time, she saw something glittering and giving off light. Under the sunlight, it was very difficult to confirm what it was. But, this thing that was changing without regard to any rules in the middle of her vision could only be one thing.

Above Nina, a ball of light was lightly swaying.

"For sure, there's no problem."

Nina said to the ball of light.

That Electronic Fairy had just been formed, and did not yet have good thinking abilities, and only continued to lightly sway above Nina.

The reason was this Electronic Fairy.

Furthermore, that day, after Nina had argued with her father, there was a reason why she had dared to run away from home.

The reason for that argument was training.

Right now anyone who recognized Nina would be very surprised to see her, but at that time, even though Nina was very dexterous, she didn't like to train very much.

The reason was, her usually good-natured father became strict enough to have changed into a different person during training. In the future, a multitude of different trainers would come to the mansion to hone her skills, but the foundations were all taught by her father.

The so-called foundations were really only getting used to weapons. Repeated practice.

Throughout, she almost untiringly waved the weapon up and down. Around the same time, in order to be able to use both hands flexibly, she usually learned to do things with both hands. During breakfast and lunch, she would switch the hands she used the knife and fork with. Dinner was the same as breakfast. When she studied, every hour she had to switch her writing hand.

Kei training also began around this time, but it was still only at the meditation stage.

During a meeting among Military Artists where instruction was exchanged, Nina saw her father using both hands to manipulate weapons, continually performing various techniques, thinking in her heart how nice it would be if she began training and all of these techniques were taught to her, but disappointment interrupted her thoughts here.

Every day was just monotonous repetitive training and meditation, and it was easy to get bored.

After that was today's argument.

She begged her father to teach her techniques, and her father's face turned serious, explaining the important nature of the foundations. However, the immature Nina did not understand.

Today, her lack of enthusiasm was a level higher than usual.

She pestered her father, who had begun teaching as he usually did, even more.

Hence, she was hit.

With remorse and sadness, Nina ran away from home.

Where should she go..... She immediately thought of Harley's family's house, which she had recently visited and which was close by. But, Harley's father was good friends with Nina's father, and would contact him quickly.

"Wu....."

Nina's closed lips leaked out a sound while she thought. Her face still felt hot. Though she hadn't looked in a mirror to confirm, it was probably still red.

So, where should she go.

Nina decided to run away, and not to return for two or three days.

She took out a money pouch from the pocket of her training clothes. It was a plastic card case with a mascot drawn on it. Inside was placed a debit card meant for a child's use.

When she ran away from home, this was the only thing she had taken with her from her room.

The numerous things like sweets and bread that she had bought during the day and hidden somewhere would be enough to pass the night. Fortunately, she was still not yet cold. But as a precaution, if she bought an outer coat she would definitely get along fine.

Even though this child was able to think this far ahead, she unknowingly turned her pace towards Harley's home.

Then, she saw it.

What she saw was a park. She bought an ice cream at a booth, and thought about what she needed to buy for running away from home.

Sitting on a bench, she enumerated the necessities in her mind. She didn't have much to use. The Antalk family had produced many Military Artists recently, and hence was very rich. However, Nina's pocket money was not much.

Therefore, she had to plan. After planning for a long while, she finally decided what things to buy. She bought everything she needed to run away from home.

"As expected, I'll need Dominif's cookies."

Nina nodded her head in satisfaction at that conclusion. She had not bought them retail, but rather in a package. However, after buying those cookies she had spent all of her pocket money. In that case, that day's three meals would have to be only cookies. She would have to sleep in a field, and her bed would become unnatural. In the first place she did not have money for bedding. She had wanted to buy a warm coat from an old clothing store, but all she had was three meals worth of cookies.

Even if it were Nina, would it be okay to eat only cookies for three meals?

"It's okay, anyway, they're still Dominif's."

Confirming her faith in sweets, she confidently nodded her head.

After finishing her ice cream, Nina jumped off the bench. Stretching her two legs, she jumped down with force. She brushed off the scraps of ice cream sticking to her hands, clearing the way for Dominif's.

At that time, she saw it.

In the center of the park was a single giant tree. A park in the Senou City would definitely have a big tree like this. But the tree in this park was especially big, and it would take at least ten people arm to arm to wrap around it. Its leaves were held up like umbrellas, forming shadows.

That tree was the nest of the Electronic Fairies.

The Electronic Fairies that were gathered would give off light even during the day. Once it became night, they would sparkle with light, and the streetlights were unnecessary among the flurry of balls of light in the park. If the Senou City held a festival, generally people would gather in the heart of this park.

However, right now there were no human figures in the surroundings of the great tree.

Other than one person.

"......Ah?"

That person entered Nina's vision.

Her immature internal Kei helped her raise her visual acuity.

It was a man. A man whose clothes were colorless. The distance was too great so it was still fuzzy. The man carried a big bag on his shoulders, and held something in his hands. Several strongly curious Electronic Fairies had gathered in the man's surroundings.

The Electronic Fairies left the man in unison.

"......Eh?"

For a moment, Nina didn't know what had happened. The man rapidly put the thing in his hand into the bag, looking around himself. After meeting Nina's gaze, he promptly left the park.

He didn't run. Rather, he walked quickly, leaving in a panic.

"S, stop!"

She yelled out without thinking. At that time, she understood.

He had originally caught an Electronic Fairy. The metal cage-like thing in his hands held one inside.

(He's a thief)

As she ran chasing the man, Nina's memories were pulled out.

Nina only knew that she had heard these sorts of rumors before in Schneibel.

It seemed like other cities did not have Rigzario machines. They only had a single Electronic Fairy in their mechanical department, and they had never seen small Electronic Fairies.....

So, there were people who tried to steal Electronic Fairies for research. Many types of people tried to steal them, some selling them to other cities, some sending them to faraway cities' research institutions.

The Senou City's Military Artists did not only battle with filth monsters, but also constantly fought against these kinds of criminals. Nina's father was no exception.

"Criminal!"

She yelled loudly. Perhaps the City Police Military Artists that were on patrols would run over.

(Chase him, catch him)

The sense of justice in her own heart urged Nina to move.

The male also seemed like a Military Artist. Even though Nina accelerated her speed, the distance between the two slowly pulled apart.

(He's going to escape)

The gap between a child who had just begun training and a grown Military Artist was wide. With the vigorously widened distance, there was no hope of chasing him.

(If I don't go around)

Nina was aware that only chasing from the back would be useless, and decided to take a detour.

She decided to first go to the Accommodations Facility. If she followed along this road, she should arrive at the entrance to the facility.

"Uh....."

The entrance would definitely be closed, and passage should require formalities and an inspection of body and belongings. If she simply ran straight, the man would have the advantage, but if it were during the entrance inspection.....

"This way!"

Her brain quickly working, Nina changed her direction. Turning the corner and using a streetlight to climb up to the rooftops, she followed the roofs to chase the man.

Within her expectations, the man was at the entrance to the Accommodations Facility. From a tourism point of view, there was still a lot of time for shopping. There were not many people around the entrance. She quickly turned to the man.

(I should grab him tightly)

Jumping down from the rooftops, she slowly drew close so as to not be noticed. Whether it was because he had settled down after not seeing Nina, or if he were acting casual in front of the guards, the man's face was calm.

She reached the man. He removed the bag from his shoulder.

(Now)

Nina ran. The man was focused on the package, and his response was slow. The guards were normal people. If a Military Artist appeared in front of them they should just wait by the side... ... The man would not be caught like an ordinary thief.

"Ah!"

Behind her back came the man's distress. The bag had entered Nina's hands. She ran while opening the bag, pulling out the cage, and then throwing the bag away. As she ran, she was unclear as to how to open it, so she ran while holding it.

"Stop!"

Behind her back came the man's sounds of rage. Nina continued running. However, this was the Senou City. The yard that Nina had been familiar with since she was small. Nina ran away through shortcuts.

When she reached the city's outer edge, no one had followed her.

"Okay, this is fine."

Nina put the cage on the ground, pondering how to open it. This way, Nina didn't need to think about how to fool guards' inspections. Therefore she could concentrate on opening the cage.

It wasn't easily openable like a normal cage. Maybe she needed to remove the fencing, but she didn't know a method. Though she thought of breaking it, it was to no avail. If she magnificently

destroyed it, it would be troublesome if the Electronic Fairy inside had an accident.

"Do I have no choice but to turn this over to the police?"

As she muttered this,

"Do you think I would let you do that..... hm?"

From behind Nina came a voice.

It was already late when she realized things were bad. As she held the cage thinking of escaping, she was grabbed by the neck.

She had originally thought of surrounding that man, but had been captured by him.

"What were you thinking."

Nina was lifted into the air, and the man reached his hand towards the cage. Nina desperately hugged it in her arms to protect it.

"You nasty thief!"

She bit his hand.

"Ahh! Asshole!"

Nina was thrown. While she was falling she hit a fence squarely with the center of her back, and breathing became difficult for a moment. But, she grabbed the fence before she slipped, and in a breath climbed up and moved to the other side.

"You know how important Electronic Fairies are, and you still come to steal them! What kind of Military Artist are you!"

The man crossed the fence. Nina ran. She had little hope of overcoming him.

(That guy's terrible)

She thought of how to beat him. As she thought, she continued running. It was only a matter of time until she was caught. However, there was nowhere to run. If she tried to cross the tall fence again, she could be caught again in that moment. She could only continue running forward, and Nina knew she would be caught sooner or later, but there were no choices other than running. She hugged the cage tightly.

"Ah-"

Suddenly, her foot slipped. The floor was flat, and didn't have anything to trip over.

(He got me)

She muttered as she fell to the ground. What had the man done? Just as she tried to climb back up, her back was stepped on, and she couldn't move her body.

"You little devil, don't get carried away!"

"Ugh-"

She immediately hid the cage under her chest. The man couldn't get it, and kicked Nina impatiently.

With that kick, the cage was released.

In a panic, she thought of retrieving the cage, but the man blocked her and picked it up. He planted another foot in Nina's abdomen, and she had no way of moving.

".....Are you the Antalk family's rotten little devil?"

The man muttered as he looked at Nina.

"Why do you recognize me....."

"Surely you're clear on that."

"You..... you're from the Senou City?"

Nina was stunned. A Senou City Military Artist, and a resident of the Senou City who lived together with Electronic Fairies, actually wanted to take an Electronic Fairy out of the city.....

"What are you thinking! Electronic Fairies are the city's important..... friends."

Friends.

In the Senou City, it was a household saying. The people who grew up in the city Schneibel that defended its Electronic Fairies had all heard this kind of talk growing up. The big trees in the park absorbed liquified selenium to grow, and Electronic Fairies used its sap for food. Although the Electronic Fairies did not participate in the government of the city, they contributed greatly to the environment of the city.

The Senou City had never experienced a food crisis since it was born, nor had it suffered the troubles of blight, which was all credited to the small Electronic Fairies.

The Autonomous Mobile City Senou, with an environment far better than all the other cities. They could live so well because of the benefits of their small neighbors' help, he should have been informed of this much.

"Why?"

She was not content. Since she wouldn't let other cities' people come to steal the Electronic Fairies, yet a favored resident of the Senou City also thought to do so, she was very grieved.

".....Regardless of how healthy you are, there's nothing to talk about if I can't get that Electronic Fairy."

"Why? You're a Military Artist....."

"A little brat like you doesn't understand anything about the business of adults!"

Her abdomen was stepped on with force, and her words came to a halt halfway. She felt like there was the smell of blood mixed in with the breath that was forced out of her.

The sad feeling in Nina was extinguished. The flames of resistance were ignited. She became angry just by thinking of the man who was a citizen of the Senou City but yet treated Electronic Fairies so roughly, and perhaps another reason was that the man had called them "the business of adults".

In her mind floated the figure of her father who only conducted training of the foundations.

"Che!"

Nina hit the man's foot hard. His ankle. The metal on his boot scratched his skin. Her own fist bled.

Despite this, the man hadn't stabilized after receiving this sudden attack. Nina seized this opportunity to escape. She also used her head to knock the man's chin. His sharp chin hurt her own head. Holding back tears from the corners of her eyes, she recaptured the cage.

And after that she continued running away.

However, the man didn't let her succeed.

"You brat!"

Being caught unprepared by a child's attack, the man became even more furious.

He released external Kei.

It was not his full power, but that was unknown.

Only, Nina was able to notice the danger, and crossed her arms as if she were going to receive a charge.

However, she was unable to fully block it.

The external Kei crashed against her crossed arms, and a rumbling noise spilled forth. The sound of the cage breaking came from within her wrists. Her feet left the ground. The child's light body had jumped up along with the erupting external Kei, but had not fallen back to the ground.

She was thrown off the outer edge.

After that, she couldn't remember what had happened. She had fallen to the ground, and wanted to do something right then, and tried to touch the ground from the pipes. She understood from this kind of situation.

However, at that time, her legs were fractured. And after the first encounter she had lost her awareness, so she couldn't think of what had happened afterwards.

Sustaining the external Kei, her arms and legs had successively failed her.

Even if she was aware of it, her body was unable to move, so several hours had passed like this.

She could only lie there. The sky lost its blue color, becoming an evening crimson. The temperature gradually dropped, and her body began shivering. It might also be because she had lost lots of blood.

Her fractured limbs had not changed their heat, but they did not relieve the cold. She felt pain like needles in her muscles, making her feel very uncomfortable, and letting her realize the abnormal situation that her life and body were in.

Even if she realized, she could do almost nothing, and no one other than her could realize her suffering.

Nina already did not have the leisure to be impatient.

But, she couldn't even cry for help.

The man believed that Nina had fallen to her death, so he had not come to check. The cage was also broken, and the Electronic Fairy safely escaped, and was floating above Nina.

The man's plans had completely fizzled.

This confidence was the only thing currently supporting Nina.

But, this pillar became unreliable in the face of the setting sun.

It was still early to be swallowed in darkness. Because the city's legs blocked the sun, it was easy for shadows to form in that place.

The scene of the sun dipping into the wilderness always had a hard-to-describe loneliness. But she did not have the leisure to feel that way. She could only feel worried about things.

Her vision was narrow, inviting loneliness. Her throat felt unbearably parched.

Perhaps she should be glad that she didn't feel hungry, though it was only because she felt weak.

If her surroundings became darker, she would be able to clearly see the faint light of the Electronic Fairy.

"It's okay."

The Electronic Fairy was worried about her. The quiet reply of her voice passed by her own ears.

(Am I..... dead?)

Her throat was dried, and even breathing was difficult.

"It's great that I got to buy Dominif's cookies."

As night quietly fell, Nina was secretly glad.

"Running away from home is really hard....."

She was afraid that her own consciousness was beginning to become chaotic. Her own thinking and speaking was becoming unclear. Her vision gradually became covered by darkness, and she felt that it was already evening.

It was not really night yet, but rather that Nina had lost consciousness.

-When her consciousness was restored, it was genuinely night.

But, because of the glare, Nina screwed her eyes shut.

"What.....?"

Had help come? She thought this. It was a prediction in line with the situation. Nina had not returned home, her parents had become worried, came to look for her, and then noticed her. That was the most likely sequence of events.

But, there actually were no people around, only glowing light surrounding Nina.

"Electronic Fairies?"

Balls of glowing of light had gathered together to surround Nina.

Then, the light behind the group of Electronic Fairies became particularly strong.

".....Eh?"

It seemed like there were people. But, this was not the case. It was a nude woman, giving off the same kind of surrounding glow as the Electronic Fairies. However, the place where her wrists should be were instead replaced by wings.

Her long hair was decorated with several long feathers. From her waist extended long feathers like a skirt. From her ankles down, she had the feet of a bird, staying still in midair as if they wanted to grab the air.

"Schneibel?"

It couldn't be.

She had never seen her, but she had never seen an Electronic Fairy this large, so it must be her, Schneibel.

When the reply came, a sound passed by her ears. A great sound was nearby, and the city's legs stopped.

The Electronic Fairy Schneibel.

Schneibel overlooked Nina. It wouldn't be too much to say Schneibel was this city's consciousness, this city's body.

"Ah....."

The half-human half-animal Electronic Fairy calmly and steadily looked at Nina. Those eyes were full of gratitude towards the Electronic Fairies who were attempting rescue, and concern towards Nina's injuries.

There was no speech. However, with just a look, one could realize what she wanted to express. Nina became happy. She had not done anything wrong, and had earned approval.

"How great."

She closed her eyes, slowly tasting her leaking tears. She was happy. In her heart, she wanted her death to hurry up and arrive. Though she didn't want to die, and she wanted to become strong through her father's training and protect the city, right now even if she died it wouldn't make a difference.

For this, she was happy.

Things were like this..... Still, Nina found the things that happened next simply incredible.

One Electronic Fairy, one glowing ball of light was flying back and forth in Schneibel's surroundings. Schneibel tilted her chin at that ball of light, and lightly nodded her head.

Nina didn't understand what that represented.

The ball of light moved from Schneibel to above Nina. It drew a single circle, then flew straight into Nina's chest.

Heat bloomed inside Nina, spreading through her whole body. That heat seemed like it wanted to burn out Nina, but she had no way to cry out.

What was happening. She had just gotten praised, but suddenly , this kind of thing had happened.....

However, the heat instantly disappeared. The pain also dissipated without a trace, leaving Nina with her reply.....

She stood up.

".....Eh?"

Instantly noticing the condition of her body, she was unable to voice her complaint that she had just been thinking of giving to Schneibel.

The temperature of her fractured limbs should have been very hot, they should have been swollen and bruised, and she had felt all of this before, but right now they didn't hurt at all.

"How.....?"

She couldn't believe her own condition.

Schneibel's praise.

However. She promptly realized the abnormality.

To be able to notice that, Nina was a smart child. However, in this kind of situation, was that lucky or unlucky.

The ball of light that had entered Nina's chest.

The ball of light that she had saved herself.

The ball of light who had suffered along with Nina and encouraged her.

The Electronic Fairy.

"No way..... How can that be....."

No one denied it. The clumps of light surrounding Nina..... Among the numerous Electronic Fairies, not a single one flew next to Nina, showing their disagreement. Schneibel's eyes were full of calm, and gazed at Nina.

Tears fell. However, with the tears this time, she could not feel happy at all. Only sadness. Utter sadness.

The Electronic Fairy had sacrificed its life for her.

She could only think of this.

"No way..."

At a loss, Nina stood there for a long time.

The light had guarded Nina forever.

The sound of whispers around Nina. Though she felt this way, there was no conclusive evidence. Her hands and feet had feeling. She wasn't too clear if she existed in reality.

"A shadow of a fragment of the dream. Is that what you are?"

That kind of voice came.

Fragment of the dream?

What was that?

(I don't understand)

Nina thought. She didn't know how it was expressed. Even though it was a sound it didn't enter through her ears.

So, was it a dream then?

However, a dreamscape wouldn't be this realistic.

Nina's dreams were always vague and discontinuous. Short scenes continuously interchanged, and they were impossible to make head or tail of.

But today alone was unusual.

And, since she could so clearly remember things from when she was ten.....

(What's going on?)

Obviously, things were strange.

However, she completely didn't know what to do. She had just tried to test whether she could stand up, but her body gave no

response. She wasn't impatient that she couldn't move, but she thought the air was very oppressive.

"Originally, this was a secret that Zuellni sensed."

"Hmm, this is already no longer just a shadow."

"-So you were that kind of child. No, even if there is lineage, blood is not enough to describe it."

"Your actual relatives have great significance, huh."

"Yes. It was intended this way from the beginning."

"Ah, that's how it is."

"It's appeared."

"So it's appeared."

"It's appeared."

The whispers conveyed these meaningful words.

However, she didn't understand their meaning.

She didn't understand, but it seemed like the sounds were deciding something.

It obviously concerned Nina, but they ignored Nina and continued talking.

"-The divine being has appeared."

"Then we will have to change our actions."

"We should change them."

"We should bring it back."

"As long as it's a fragment of the dream it doesn't matter what we do. No, absorb it, let me become even closer to completion."

"That would be good. Though it's impure, it's also matured."

"That's true. If we can't reach the strength of the copies, it's not worth mentioning. As expected of the fragments of the dream here , mixing is the best policy."

"That way is fine."

"That's good."

What had they decided?

"Now - we need to unlock the seal....."

"That, and also we should hurry up and....."

Suddenly, the speech behind her intermingled with murmurs and disappeared.

"Oh....."

"It's come."

"No, it's not only that."

"Could it be?"

"Could it be someone from Grendan?"

"Could it be?"

"However-"

"This external strength"

"It's very close to mine."

"This is-"

"This is....."

The chat passed her by, and unable to understand its significance, Nina was only able to continue floating through this ocean.

The sky suddenly underwent a mutation.

A street of Zuellni, not in the middle of the school buildings, but rather at the end, near the mixed student residences and stores.

It was a blaze.

A suddenly appearing blaze that swirled like a vortex, rising to the sky, colliding with the air filters, and leaking air dissipating outside making it even worse.

The source of that fire.

"Haha, what kind of joke is this?"

Savaris was standing on a roof, looking into Zuellni's sky.

There was light of seven colors. A scene never before seen, and the nearby pillar of flame would soon burn out.

"This kind of scene has begun."

The smell of battle stimulated the mucous membranes in his nose.

He saw the source of the pillar of flame.

In that place was a crimson-haired girl.

A voluptuous beauty with a wild nature, glowering at the sky with a spear in her hand. The clothes she wore were tattered pieces of cloth, almost the same as being nude. It seemed as if she hadn't the slightest sense of shame, full of sensuality, with her whole body enveloped with overflowing Kei, and along with the naturally shifting blaze, she resembled a sacred goddess of war.

Exactly what was the situation?

Savaris was not very clear.

Everything had happened quickly. Gorneo also felt uncertain, and also wanted to know the answer.

Behind Gorneo's back, Kei suddenly expanded outwards.

The moment he felt this, the room was filled with flame. Savaris reflexively broke a window and withdrew to the roof from the balcony. Flame flew out of the window that Savaris had broken, then undulated and distorted like an animal to become a pillar of flame, reaching towards the sky.

The sky shone with seven-colored light.

"Gorneo, are you dead?"

That blaze. He thought that perhaps his brother who had still not emerged might have been too late to escape and met his end, but, he didn't feel that he had to go save him.

If he died, the central position of the Luckens would have to be assigned to some other brother of the household.

"Well then. What else will happen?"

There was still flame in the seven-colored sky.

The one who produced that flame, that naked beauty, undoubtedly was Shante. The girl who had seen through Savaris himself while he concealed himself with Sakkei. But even that

queen was unable to change her skeleton, and since Shante was able to produce such great changes in her posture and appearance, in the end she must be using some kind of witchcraft.

Also, this sort of huge expanding Kei.

He held hostility towards the hosts who owned this sort of Kei.

The seven-colored sky.

Who was it who had caused this kind of mutation, where was he, and why had this happened?

"No matter how I look at it, it's impossible."

Without showing any indecision, Savaris muttered.

"......If it's like this, then it has something to do with the Wolf Faces, right?"

While watching, Savaris thought about how to inadvertently throw the problem to someone else.

The blaze burning in the sky would soon lose its momentum and disappear completely. The seven-colored light still remained in the sky. But the color was shining less brightly, about to be engulfed by the original stars and darkness.

When it had completely disappeared, Savaris instinctively perceived the end of this strange night.

Though the tower of flame had disappeared, the Kei overflowing from Shante had not weakened. That figure with beautiful limbs and the fighting spirit of a carnivorous beast, and her eyes staring at her prey-

"Gah!"

With a short growl, Shante flew from the balcony. As Shante chased, tracing a red path through the air, Savaris also jumped out.

However, his breathing had already changed, and he jumped towards a different place.

The reason that Savaris changed his breathing was because there was another Kei.

If Shante's was fire, then this was thunder.

Very swift, as well as very heavy, that blow of Kei made one associate it with the capriciousness of the weather.

That blow of Kei, bringing a feeling of strength, rushed towards Savaris.

Dix, who had reached Nina's room, saw it. For a single of a dormitory, Nina's room was pretty common. This dormitory had not been constructed while Dix was there, but the room's size could be mostly understood from the exterior of the dormitory and the configuration of the entrance's interior.

This night. This seven-colored night. The aurora split the starry sky.

In that place, Nina was wearing western sleeping clothes.

In her surroundings, Wolf Faces encircled her.

"You, get away from Nina!"

Still standing in the corridor, Dix yelled.

The sound of Kei mixing swayed and rippled in space, and sparks scattered around the door. Nina and the others' bodies had already begun to sway.

(Che, as expected)

As a result, Dix's heart was left speechless.

(My opponents led me by the nose)

The world of the Wolf Faces. The power that had changed Zuellni into this was concentrating in that area.

Because of that, this room that belonged to Zuellni couldn't even keep its shape.

(I guess I stupidly entered)

If he entered, he would have no choice but to comply with a different set of rules. It was because the power of Military Artists existed on this side that they could use it. In a different kind of battle on the other side, the Wolf Faces would have an advantage.

Since he already lost in numbers, if he also lost in fighting power, then there would be no meaning.

"It's you as expected, Dixerio Maskane."

"Aah, it's me indeed. Is there anyone else? That would be very strange."

Dix replied with an emotionless voice.

"I disagree, I disagree."

"Most of the people who shared your cause have been eliminated."

"Forgotten ends."

"Lifeless ends."

"Remembered ends."

Painful recollections made Dix's face frown. When he was in Zuellni, Dix had fought like he did now, and had pulled in other people like Nina.

He thought of that dead end.

The generation who had built that dormitory did not remember anything about Dix. The girl who had made the watch for him had died because she was involved with this. Also, in the end during the graduation ceremony he had rejected that girl who had wanted to get closer to Dix.

Of the people who had spent time together with Dix in Zuellni, no one remembered anything about him.

The only thing left was a name in the school records.

"Especially, isn't it painful to live in this world?"

"You only drag many people into there."

"Join our ranks."

"With your presence, we can connect the hole between this world and our world."

"You erode the world."

"Painful, isn't it."

"You can also return."

To that unconvincing temptation, Dix laughed provocatively, refusing.

"It's not a joke."

His hand holding the iron whip stabbed out. The Kei covering the Dite leaked out, scattering sparks. It was an intense strike that exuded sparks.

"You destroyed my city. You killed my father, killed my brother , destroyed everyone. The people I hated, the people I trusted, with no regard for how good a thing was, everything."

Everyone had been killed by the people brought by the Wolf Face in front of him.

The only one who had been left was Dix. The filth monsters who had come to the City of Strong Desire Velzenheim before it stopped because of the smell of humans that it gave must have been disappointed. Only the residual odor of humans was left behind in that place.

No one was there anymore.

There were no figures or clothing, nor were there corpses, only traces of the lives of the people who had lived in that destroyed place. Simply gazing at the city that had totally disappeared made one feel a powerless sense of futility.

All of them had been snatched away by the group of people in front of him.

The Wolf Faces said that they had been chosen, but this group of beings had embezzled them.

"I will take all of those things back. If I can't recapture them from your hands then I will smash them. Dixerio Maskane's recapturing is just that, smashing your flesh and bones."

Crackling Kei was released across the whip, and sparks again scattered into the sky, pouring out in waves.

"How?"

It was intended to be provocative. It was intended to be emotional rather than stupid, but, that kind of performance was already in error.

On the other side of this door was a different world. The power of Military Artists could not be used.

Overwhelmingly adverse conditions.

However..... Dix could not be impatient.

"I'll do it."

A smile floating on his face, he said this.

At about the same time.

Suddenly, flame appeared in that room. That fire started tiny, as if a tiny nova had been produced in that black world, and in a

moment became a billowing blaze, submerging the room in a uniform crimson color.

"That....."

Dix's indifferent laugh made the Wolf Faces waver.

"Did you forget? So far that guy has existed in many different conditions. You should have acknowledged that, right?"

That moment, the ground and sky of Zuellni were connected by a gigantic pillar of flame. The fire covered Zuellni, and due to this the city's outsiders were incinerated.

Of course, that room was also affected.

"A god of fire?"

"It's appeared."

When Nina had been dragged into that battle, and faced a strong obstacle in front of her, she had acted according to her beliefs, and summoned a kouhai.

It was because the current situation ignored time and space that she could do that kind of thing.

The current appearance was the same way.

"Do you have anything that surpasses this? The odds are against you, and you will forever be hunted."

"Access should still be restricted, how....."

The woman's voice shook slightly, as expected.

Sure enough, the beginning had been when Nina came in contact with that thing. If the Wolf Faces had not acted from below Shante, she might not have been able to gain access and accomplish this with Dix.

However, that the Wolf Faces had used bait to find Shante, and had forced out her original form using Heartseer Fruit - it was a possibility.

But, there was no way to explain that.

When the flame disappeared, the dorm room had returned to their surroundings. Nina was sleeping on the bed. The Wolf Faces who had been pulled back by the rules of this world planned to use their Kei to combat the fire, but they had been pushed back halfway to the bed.

The Wolf Faces who could do nothing more had no way to resist. They welcomed the same fate as the others who had already been struck down.

".....It's all futile, huh."

The last man grumbled like this.

"But it doesn't matter how many of us you defeat, sooner or later you will be swallowed by this storm."

"Whatever you say."

Enemies eliminated.

He felt a feeling like hard candy under his feet.

It was the broken, left behind masks on the floor. They also disappeared after a short time.

He looked at Nina who slept on the bed. It seemed like her nightmare had disappeared, and other than the sweat on her forehead no traces of what the Wolf Faces had planned to do to her were visible.

The Haikizoku in Nina slept.

"I'll take it out."

Dix slowly raised his left hand, gathering Kei at his fingertips.

There was nothing good about being possessed by a Haikizoku. He couldn't understand the interest that the Wolf Faces showed towards the Haikizoku. Even if they tried, they would only suffer heavy blows, a lesson learned that Dix understood.

"Ah, if only you didn't keep targeting it."

The fingers of his hand flashing with Kei light drew close to Nina's abdomen.

However, he had to stop.

A huge Kei approached.

(What is it?)

The Wolf Faces had already retreated. The abnormality enveloping the city had been instantly returned to normal by Shante.

Then, who exactly was the owner of this Kei?

Dix who had stopped his hand jumped out of the dorm. In any case, he could not allow this place to become a battlefield.

"Wow, what an interesting night."

That man said these words with a light tone of voice. A reckless smile was plastered on his face. If one only looked at his expression, it seemed as if he were greeting someone he met while taking a walk.

However, his whole body was filled with Kei.

He faced Dix.

(This guy is a problem)

Looking across, Dix was left speechless. He clearly understood the gap in strength.

(I don't have a chance)

At least it was like this.

"Don't you think it's an interesting night?"

The nameless man said the same kind of thing again.

"Hmph, is that so. What are you doing in this kind of night. When the weather conditions are so poor, you should really stay indoors."

"Aah, that's how it is. But not necessarily. I don't know whether it is going to rain, so it's unknown whether finding shelter under a roof will be of any use, so what's the point of staying indoors?"

"It would be nice if you could go back to your bed and cover your eyes and ears and pretend that several things never happened."

"But, those things are not all subjective. It's not like I'll disappear, and from my point of view I see this as already very interesting. Also I got to meet you. Regardless of whether you're an enemy or a companion, it's a good thing. I found something interesting outside of Grendan. That queen is probably already rethinking the dispatch."

"......A Heaven's Blade Successor."

"I'm very clear on that."

It began.

Light came from the male's wrists and feet. Dites were encased in his gloves and boots. His handguards and footguards restored

with a sound. Martial arts. Right fist. Words swam in his mind, and while they swam his body began moving.

He received it with his iron whip.

"I'm Savaris, what about you?"

"Someone who should be dead."

Ignoring the numbness of his right hand, Dix emitted Kei from his whole body. However, Savaris had already returned to his previous distance.

(He's playing around)

If he wanted to kill Dix in a moment, he might be able to. The whole body was a weapon in martial arts, and the distance they had been at before was favorable for Savaris. However, it was a troublesome distance for Dix who was waving a large weapon around.

He had discarded that distance.

(He must be playing)

"What's up? Things shouldn't be like that, right? You should have some hidden skill. I understand."

Savaris had not taken up a stance. However, he had no openings. Though he was playing, he had not relaxed his vigilance

. Without a stance, nor had he tidied up his posture. His awareness and body were compressed and condensed for battle, able to erupt in a moment.

But, the prey never developed ways to become the hunter. The reality of the hunter did not change, and there was no leeway.

He couldn't escape.

".....Honestly, there's no meaning in this for me."

"In that case, if you let me roam freely, what if I go destroy the thing that you want to protect? It's in this building, right?"

"Outrageous."

"I don't have much leisure time like this. And this has something to do with those Wolf Faces, right? But you're a little different from those weak guys, or perhaps you're enemies? What's more, isn't the girl with the Haikizoku in this building?

"You....."

"Regardless of what the impact is, that's something that I have to bring back."

That was the reason why a Heaven's Blade Successor was here.

(His target is the Haikizoku?)

What did this mean? Dix pondered. Wasn't the power of the Haikizoku something unnecessary to cities?

Was it necessary? Had the quality of Military Artists fallen? Could it be that it was possible to produce some ability that surpassed power? That couldn't be.

Then, what did this mean?

Did it perhaps have something to do with that place?

(.....What should I choose to make that guy quit)

"I have no choice."

Making up his mind, Dix used his left hand to cover his chin, and moving his hand further up, covered his mouth.

There was nothing else similar to that movement.

If the one who stood there were a Wolf Face rather than Dix, it would have been very fitting.

It was the movement of wearing a mask.

His vision momentarily narrowed.

Once it recovered, strength had filled his entire body.

"Oho."

Savaris laughed even deeper, raising his wrist. Facing his opponent with half of his body allowed him to become narrower.

"So you're taking it seriously?"

But the smile on that face had not disappeared. Actually, it had become even wider.

A shallow smile that seemed as if it had been pasted on, a smile that was part of a strong emotion.

"You should feel grateful."

From the seams of the mask came blue-colored Kei that covered his whole body. It was the same as the Wolf Faces.

"Yeah, I can't thank you enough."

His whole body was surrounded by expanded Kei but his attitude did not waver. However, he accepted Dix's Kei, making welcome preparations.

"Only this is left, companion of Grendan....."

Holding back painful memories, the iron whip on his shoulder.

One strike.

Regardless of his opponent, Dix stabilized himself to decide the battle in one strike. He would not cower even if his opponent were a Heaven's Blade Successor.

Savaris enjoyed it, lowering his waist further.

He stood there, planning to watch Dix's moves and respond to them.

Two people both stood in that place unmoving. This space was not appropriate for estimating, but they calculated the opportunities for their opponent to strike, continually raising the density of their internal Kei.

(.....This guy doesn't have his Heaven's Blade)

Unleashing his Kei, Dix confirmed that fact. Savaris's Dite had the texture of a Platinum Dite, loaded with a Ruby Dite. He was using that to refine his Kei.

The Heaven's Blade was also a Platinum Dite, but the thing Savaris was using now wasn't that.

That thing only had the appearance of a Platinum Dite, but had a totally different substance.

Having already confirmed the lack of a Heaven's Blade, he thought. A Heaven's Blade Successor who refined Kei for his martial arts.

In a second, the contest should be decided. Because of the reason that had dragged that person into this, it was unknown what things would become later. They also existed on different timelines. They wouldn't need to meet again after this.

Upon careful observation, the person under the mask didn't have special features. However, that man was a rough person,

with a thick body. He had a seemingly all-encompassing sense of a security, and at the same time held steady ambitions. An imperial demeanor.

The hidden strength that Savaris had spoken of entered this realm, as if an opposite extreme.

(Well, I think it would be better to end this useless matter)

Dix, who had decided upon that, moved.

Raijin.

At an appropriate opportunity he charged through the space between the two, brandishing the iron whip.

By the time he drew close, Savaris hadn't moved.

As he took his first step, he realized this.

(He hasn't entered a stance)

He perceived that attitude and got angry.

Of course, it was impossible that he would become timid. Regardless of the situation, since he had already released once, there would be no meaning in stopping.

The iron whip guided lightning, crashing down towards the head of Savaris who could not be forgiven.

That moment - in that moment, the smile on Savaris's face disappeared. His eyes that were always narrowed opened wide, but Dix saw the sweat that emerged on his forehead.

Savaris's left hand moved. Would the iron whip be blocked?

(He might be able to catch up.....)

No. He couldn't think like that.

Even if he could match the speed of Raijin, it was impossible to receive the strike with one hand. He would smash Savaris's confidence with his two hands.

But, Dix was betrayed by reality.

A heavy sound rang out that seemed to shake the air. The ground between the two was cut open, and burst outwards. The scaffolding on the exterior of the nearby structures shook intensely , and the things on it collapsed.

The shock of the blow had been concentrated at the impact point, and had penetrated through. The aftermath had not been reduced.

It had not been reduced, and only this had happened.

Moreover, Savaris had endured it.

".....How is it possible to do that!"

"Aah no, it really hurts."

Savaris's hand that grabbed the iron whip sprayed blood. The handguard that covered it had also been damaged. The place that the hand had protected - Savaris's face, was dyed in a red color by the droplets of blood that scattered out, and the blood that spilled from his broken forehead also mixed in.

Savaris's hand pulled in the distance to Dix.

"Ah, my whole body's numb. You're lucky that I wasn't able to counter."

Savaris clenched his right fist that was fixed by his waist.

If he struck out, a large hole would certainly have opened in Dix's chest.

"However, I understand your strength now."

"Really..... I couldn't do it."

Savaris understood Dix's situation, and Dix also understood Savaris's situation.

Savaris's left hand hung down. It wasn't weakness, his bone had definitely been dislocated. His skull might have been broken. The bones of his left wrist had also received an effect.

He gave up on the bone of his shoulder, which was at the stage of urgently pestering him.

(Did he do that unreasonable kind of thing on purpose to learn my strength?)

For someone as strong as Savaris, that kind of thing could be completely cured with a few days of internal Kei treatment. Of course, it was obvious that if he wanted to recover more quickly it would be normal to go to a hospital.

But, was there really someone who would let himself fall under that dangerous move for that kind of purpose?

In short, Savaris was that kind of person.

He had never thought about the battles that were in front of him .

He never even had to think about if a battle would make him happy.

Battle-crazed.

"It's really annoying that someone like you is here."

"Hasn't it been destined from the start? That I'd be here."

"How would that kind of thing be."

As to how Savaris managed to get his feet to walk over from that side, he had no idea.

But, Savaris surpassed Dix, and from that side came a deep sense of danger.

This man didn't fit the situation, and perhaps he was able to move like the Wolf Faces.

It was a possibility.

If they battled there it would be very interesting.

"Let's continue."

"Can you match me?"

Wasn't a comparison of their methods even more related to strength? His face held confidence in this. He didn't believe the effects of receiving Raijin would disappear. The color that his bone injuries gave off had not returned to normal, and however you looked at it his arms would not let him continue battle. Moreover, if he could not use his arms his body's balance would be thrown off.

Other than that, obstacles should have arisen inside his body.

Even so, his smile had not changed.

You could even say that, because of this situation, the two strengths were on equal standings.

Enticed by the thought of beating that confidence, Dix held to his intellect that was quickly being driven to anger.

Silently, he prepared.

Once more, he released Raijin.

"That kind of stupid way of doing things is worthy of respect."

He no longer wanted to deal with playful words.

Savaris ignored his left arm that hung down, moving his right fist forward slightly. It didn't seem that he was planning to use his right hand to do the same thing as before.

(.....No)

He laughed, the pain of his left wrist not showing in his smile, his mood seeming to be even fiercer than before.

The Kei infused in his right hand was completely different from before. Kei that seemed like the fangs of a wild beast leaked out, bringing an almost scorching pain to Dix's face.

His comments had ended. He was now thinking of how to hunt.

Savaris's stance was a form taken for the purpose of defeating Raijin.

He had already been blocked. Dix's heart already had the feeling that he was being unraveled. But, Dix didn't abandon Raijin, and Savaris also didn't think he had fully unraveled the trick. If he couldn't use his left hand again, then he couldn't counter. If he struck two or three blows, Savaris would be the one to fall.

Because he understood that, Savaris did not use the same stance . It wasn't a stance used to protect his left hand.

Rather, it was a stance to more easily use his right hand.

(Well~ however many times I fall, I'll manage)

There was a cold sense of tension deep inside his playful words.

Would he be defeated or would he counter..... Thought he clearly saw Savaris's intent to counter, Dix still stepped forward.

Raijin.

He closed in on Savaris like lightning.

Savaris still stood there unmoving. He just laughed, his right fist not moving.

What was he thinking? It wasn't something that could be pondered during that flash of motion. If he began moving, he could only escape backwards.

The iron whip flew down towards Savaris's head.

However, this time a disastrous feeling in Dix's wrist immediately spread through his whole body.

"Ugh-"

As the only thing left for him to do, Dix corrected the mistake he had made in the degree of strength.

He completely didn't react.

Maintaining his precarious sense of balance that was almost destroyed, he yelled out loudly. His line of sight was filled by Savaris's smile as he was caught.

-cough-

Adjust his spacing. He opened his legs and firmly planted his feet in order to maintain his distance, but it was already too late.

The right fist punched forward.

It had already entered his vision.

His left shoulder. Was this an eye for an eye? He didn't even have any spare time to feel pain. He suddenly didn't feel anything beginning from his left shoulder.

He perceived himself almost shattering.

In that moment, Dix hastily changed his plans. The strength that he was attempting to suppress changed its direction.

Towards Savaris.

Noticing this change. Savaris still let out a smile.

He had no other response, so he sudenly moved. It should be very easy to solve this riddle.

He was tricked.

Other than paying attention to Savaris's skills as a martial artist, he had forgotten something.

The refined Kei that he used.

The afterimage blinded his eyes, even though Dix soon understood it. However, it wasn't such an easy thing to use refined Kei to produce an afterimage.

Especially since Dix didn't pay attention to it, he was very easy to trick.

(But, it's not over!)

Dix abandoned defending himself in his assault, since he had no way to stop Savaris from moving around. Had he been read?

However, he had no time to be timid. Savaris extended his right fist.

A feeling of numbness spread all over his right hand.

A slight feeling.

The iron whip left his hand. Savaris had sent the iron whip flying with a knee. Several fingers of his right hand bent in an impossible direction.

Even still, there was no way to stop.

His hand weakly went for Savaris's face.

He grabbed his face.

Suddenly, a hot pain shot through the back of his head as if its flesh were being cut open.

It was fingers. Savaris returned the rally and changed his right fist into a knife hand attack. His breathing was blocked. His windpipe was collapsed. Ah, had everything crumbled? He felt the fingers that had cut into his flesh bending. Were they touching bones?

He would die in a moment. His brain and body disconnected.

At that same time, Dix's awareness disappeared into darkness, but he had accomplished his aim.

"Aah, how dangerous."

He felt like his body lost its heat for a moment. If they exchanged blows, the one who died might have been himself. Thinking this, Savaris's body shivered.

But, his smile deepened.

Equal degrees of fear and enthrallment ran through Savaris.

"How unfortunate. If I had the Heaven's Blade, I really would have wanted to mutually compete without tricks."

He looked at the corpse of the man under his feet. The man fallen face down prone..... He hadn't said his name even up to the end.

Even so, what was the deal with that blue Kei?

"Could it be the strength of the Haikizoku?"

If that were true, then it was really regretful. Fighting against a Heaven's Blade Successor with only ordinary strength, that was all it was. Strength full of significance in a city outside of Grendan would hold no real signifcance if brought inside Grendan, especially in the current Grendan.

Or, was it because of this man?

"I expect I can't eliminate you for the time being, huh?"

He couldn't confirm whether or not it was the Haikizoku.

At that time, a hoarse howl reached his ears.

The sound came from the dark night towards Savaris.

The seven-colored sky had disappeared, and that place had returned to an extremely ordinary city night.

"Ah, then this commotion has already ended, right?"

Perhaps it had been that girl like an incarnation of fire who had ended it. She definitely had defeated all of the remaining masked companions.

It would be nice if he could fight with that girl, but he figured that it would be too reckless with this kind of injury.

"How unfortunate."

Mumbling, he looked at his feet again. He looked again at the figure of the strength that had pushed himself into an impasse.

However, the dead body that should be there was no longer there. The blood that had overflowed like water was not there, and even the smell of blood that stimulated the nose had disappeared.

The blood that had dyed his hand, which had split flesh and broken windpipe and bones, had also disappeared in the same way.

Even the traces of damage from the time that he had initially blocked the Raijin had actually cleanly disappeared.

"So it's that way, since no one must ever have witnessed this much being so clearly cleaned up."

The articles recorded by the first-generation Luckens family head didn't have any credibility, and nothing relevant to the debris of the battlefield could be found in Grendan's records.

It was rather hard to believe that it was a completely natural thing for all of the debris to be unable to remain behind.

That was outside the imagination.

"How surprising. Perhaps Grendan might even be damaged if this sort of interesting thing happened in Grendan."

But, that was not his future. Savaris stood off by the side. What were the reasons? Perhaps it was something he had realized when he was in Myath. Leerin had seen things that Savaris could not. He had naturally been pulled into this when he had chased after Leerin to guard her.

So how did Leerin see that thing?

He pondered up to here, but had no reason that he could call the conclusion.

In the future, the time in which he was bored would somewhat decrease. He was only full of those kinds of thoughts.

However.....

"Hm?"

The change made Savaris tilt his head.

The pain in his hand had disappeared.

He saw that the black bruise on his wrist where his bone had been broken had changed colors, returning to its original healthy condition.

"This....."

He only thought about his doubt up to here.

"Hm?"

Savaris turned his head to survey his surroundings.

"Why am I here?"

Gorneo's face could be seen, but his brother should have been long since dead.

It was inconceivable. In an unstable mood, Savaris stroked his left wrist. His body was intensely hot. Even if it were slowly fading away..... the existence of that heat was inconceivable.

.....In the recent extremely fulfilling battle, he had definitely felt that way.

But, Savaris didn't feel so anymore.

"How laughable."

However many times he turned his head, sure enough, Savaris would have to think about what he would do next. He felt that it wasn't good to return to his brother's place. But, he hadn't yet decided where to sleep. Might as well go to the Mercenary Group's place now.

Savaris's memory loss clearly had a reason.

While using Raijin, upon losing his hand, Dix immediately changed his plans.

His original goal, which he had reached after Savaris had completely defeated his adversary.

At that time, he immediately accomplished his aim.

Back then when he took that kind of suicidal strike posture, it had that kind of significance. Moreover, he had succeeded. His skull was breaking, and right before his awareness died out, he thought of a way to draw close, and succeeded.

He was in contact with Savaris.

Savaris had not noticed him barely using a suitable amount of Kei from his fingertips directly to his brain. It wasn't something that gave a physical blow. It was a secret skill discreetly passed down by the Luckens family.

It was a skill used to remove the memories of families in the occasion that their techniques were stolen. By injecting Kei into the portion of the brain that served as memory storage, it erased the most recent memories. For the purposes of Dix and the other side, along with some other factors, his memories related to Dix had been removed.

Dix was at the place where most of the students of Zuellni had been during the time when he was in Zuellni. The day of the seniors' graduation ceremony. The other people would go there in later years.

Because of that skill, of the students at Zuellni at the same time as Dix, none remembered him.

But it was no use with regards to Nina. Because she was already too deeply involved with the Wolf Faces. She had looked into the profound mystery of the masked opponents. So Dix had no way to eliminate Nina's memories.

But, Dix eliminated the things that had to do with himself from Savaris.

Just that was enough. For now, he saw the situation as light. Perhaps the Wolf Faces had also seen that, and there would be no fighting over it.

But for Nina, he couldn't see that.

"We'll see how things go."

Savaris had returned to his original place, and Dix's voice did not reach him.

As the fake Zuellni began to collapse, Dix mumbled while dying on the road in front of the dormitory. Above all, he felt the blood overflowing from his wrist that had been destroyed.

Even so, Dix still lived.

From a physical standpoint, Dix had already died - so it didn't matter.

The reason was that Dix's flesh was mostly composed of other materials.

On this side, he couldn't die.

He was confined by vengeance against the Wolf Faces.

"Really..... We'll see how things turn out."

All that he had gotten from that was the confirmation of a man who was crazy about battle. Towards this, Dix twisted his bloodless mouth.

(Could it be that that guy was dispatched here)

That phalanx was on a crusade, with no place spared.

Really, he should have given that guy a great thrashing.

However, right now Dix didn't know if that would even be a temporary measure.

Three months later, when Savaris saw the stances of Wolf Faces close by-

Moreover, on that night the Wolf Faces chose Nina-

Also, what kind of influence it would have later-

Dix had no way of knowing.

What was the situation?

Gorneo let out a cold sweat, that..... no, don't look at it.

He didn't know what time it was, and his brother wasn't around .

That was good. If that person got serious, Gorneo's consciousness could very easily be deceived.

But, what was going on after all?

He looked at the alarm clock. The clock on the wall, the clock above the computer, the clock above the music player, he confirmed completely. He confirmed it from the balcony at the clock on the roof of the Student Council building. He didn't even need to use internal Kei to confirm this. They couldn't all be broken, right?

He had returned, made food, finished eating, washed the dishes , and it should be approximately that time. If Savaris needed some of his time, it would only be a few minutes.

Yes, but what was that?

He saw it on the corner of the sofa. Gorneo saw the small, luxuriously barefoot toes, and couldn't move his sight back. It was enough to see it once. He couldn't look any more.

(Why?)

Why, why would Shante sleep naked!?

Gorneo couldn't shake his doubts, but at the same time, couldn't find any clothing that person had taken off.....

.....Imagining the gazes of the people living next door to them, Gorneo's couldn't stop his cold sweat.

Shante's breathing while she slept calmly vibrated through the room.

Translation Notes and References

1. ↑ she's answering yes. "umu" is the English equivalent of mmm, a sound you make to suggest you agree. "Y...eah...," would be a good equivalent/replacement.
2. ↑ Japanese for "Good grief", "For goodness sakes" or "Sheesh ", etc. Basically it's a term to express exasperation.
3. ↑ stance here refers to 型 which is a martial arts term for posture or form.
4. ↑ 虚 was used here. It means in vain, to no purpose or fruitless. The sentence implies the table was useless for anything or at least that's what I think
5. ↑ it is uncertain who she said it to
6. ↑ in case you didn't know, commonly used Japanese word for expressing displeasure but usually in a non-angry manner. An example of this is if your friend was being extra talkative that one moment and you just say: ---->Mou~, please stop talking.
7. ↑ in here it actually says モ which is marmot in English. Marmots are famous for being used as experiments in Japan so their given kanji is . is pronounced Mormot but alternatively, it can be pronounced jikken-tai and this means experimental body.
8. ↑ In here he says 事. is a japanese way of saying 'due to matters relating to these circumstances, I won't say a thing about it.'
9. ↑ Meaning to say that Nina and Dix's attack resisted each other but that resistance was easily overwhelmed.
10. ↑ If it sounds confusing, what the author is trying to convey is that Nina admired his easygoing attitude when it came to

teaching her the amazing technique. The sentence implies that military artists rarely do this but Dix was different. The original text is: 凄

11. ↑ In here the author uses 心[mental attitude] which is something like your take at things. An example of it is: which is literally --->I always 'make it my motto'[] to tell the truth or I always try[] to tell the truth
12. ↑ original phrase is 日
13. ↑ He was referring to Nina asking him to join the platoon. Whether there was a capable soldier or not was not the problem
14. ↑ The actual sentence used here is: 雑 -------> is a word which could mean 'to go into hiding from the public and continue to do so' So what Dix is basically saying is 'Recede from the sight of the public and stay down there, small fries'. It's quite rude.
15. ↑ Actually, 鋸 was used in this sentence. It means sawtooth wave but means sawtooth and can mean shape or state. The shape can be found here: https://www.google.com/search?q=sawtooth+wave&bav=on.2,or.r_cp.r_qf.&biw=1600&bih=771&bvm=pv.xjs.s.en_US.jOYpRJj4zMA.O&um=1&ie=UTF-8&hl=en&tbm=isch&source=og&sa=N&tab=wi&ei=IPr3UcGGPI7xrQee8oHgDQ)
16. ↑ 頬->in here the author used the expression 'the cheeks loosened'. In Japanese, the expression means you are so happy until you smile(usually incessantly)
17. ↑ Japanese chess